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BOOK THE FIRST

CAIUS JULIUS

CAESAR

by

MIRKO JELUSICH

TRANSLATED BY

BERNARD MIALL

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TO
THE GREAT AMERICAN NATION,
THE HEIR OF
THE ROMAN STATE IDEAL.

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"Such was this unique man, to describe whom seems so easy and is yet so infinitely difficult. His secret lies in his completeness."

Th. Mommsen,
Röm. Gesch. III, 467

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I

THE CHILD

"Caius!"

Silence. Only the humming of the insects, in the sultry noontide air, above the many-hued flowers of the garden.

"Caius! Young master! Your father is calling you!"

The old Thracian woman turned her wrinkled face, with its blinking, short-sighted eyes, in every direction, in order the better to listen. No, not a sound! She shuffled about, sighing, and returned through the colonnade into the house.

"I cannot find him, lady," she said, in her thin, whining old voice. "Not a doubt of it; he has climbed the wall again, and is gadding about with the street-urchins. They'll be the death of him yet."

"I will look for him myself," replied the mother's full contralto. "You can go, Kyrissa. That will do."

A snuffle, and the scraping of the tired, unsteady feet; and again all was silent.

Slowly and cautiously a boy's head peeped out from behind a myrtle-bush. There was an angry sparkle in the keen grey eyes; the thin-lipped mouth was tightly compressed, and the delicate nostrils were dilated. Now the child rose to his full height, so that the slender body was visible to the hips. His right arm swung forward, slinging a stick over the garden wall, with a deftness that spoke of long practice. For an instant his eyes followed the whirling stave with a glint of satisfaction; then again they were dark and angry.

Old Kyrissa could not have come at a more inconvenient time; for just at that moment he was Archidamos, and on the point of enticing the Plataeans into a trap. Thucydides, to be sure, gave a different account of the action: but why imitate incapacity? His was the better way: since he could

not storm the city, he feigned retirement, and lay waiting in ambush. The Plataeans, of course, followed him; he thrust himself between them and the city, and destroyed them to the last man . . . He scanned the battle-field with a reflective gaze. The garden wall was for him the wall of the city. The shrubbery became a forest, in which he lay concealed with the picked body of troops conjured up by his lively imagination. He drew a deep breath; every muscle in his body grew tense. Could he not already hear the joyful cries of the townsmen, who believed that he had raised the siege? Already the gates in the city wall were swinging open; already . . .

Voices. He started out of the dream into which he had returned; in a moment he was wide awake, and back in the present. He glanced quickly about him, caught up the book that lay on the stone bench, threw himself down on his stomach, and became, to all appearances, a diligent student.

"Have things been troublesome in the court?" he heard his mother ask.

"Things are always troublesome in the court," replied his father. "You cannot imagine, Aurelia, what human vulgarity and brutality and meanness come to light in connection with the most trivial proceedings. What will it be in the Praetorium, when serious matters are at stake?" He was silent; and then, deliberately changing the subject: "When did you last see Caius?"

"In the library, when he took out the Thucydides."

"The boy reads too much, to my thinking. I must speak seriously to Gnipho. Let us by all means respect learning, but a boy as delicate as Caius must do something to strengthen his body. Cinna has recommended a fencing-master; I will send for the man one of these days. I don't want to make my son a bookworm."

"I think your anxiety may be needless," said the mother, and there was laughter in her voice. "Kyrissa thinks he has run off again to his friends of the street . . . There he is! Caius!"

The boy threw up his head, sprang to his feet, and stood at attention. But even as he waited for his parents to speak, his mind was still deep in his favorite author. For the fraction of a second his parents saw a strange and alien light in his wide, blazing eyes; and then it was as though a curtain fell, veiling the stars; and as it fell the depths were hidden, and his eyes became shallow and expressionless.

"Did you not hear Kyrissa?" his mother asked, reproachfully.

A moment's hesitation; then a nod, half defiant, half abashed.

"Then why didn't you come?" Fortunately his mother did not wait for his answer, but followed her question with another: "What are you doing here?"

"I've been reading," the boy replied, evasively.

His father came forward and picked up the book.

"Thucydides . . . And do you understand what you've been reading?"

Again the boy nodded, this time eagerly and gladly.

"Planning battles again, eh? Correcting the Grecian strategy?"

An embarrassed smile—the smile of a boy whose dreams are discovered. But his gaze was open and confiding. Caius knew his father; knew that he had understanding for what a boy thought and felt.

The aedile sat down on the bench, the book still in his hand.

"Well," he asked, in his kindly fashion, "what do you make of it all? How would *you* have conquered the Plataeans?"

Caius considered a moment; then, with his eyes on his father's, he began to unfold his plan. The aedile listened; his smile faded, and was replaced by a look of eager attention. In a moment the two were engaged in a lively debate: to every objection the boy had a ready answer. His father's eyes began to gleam with pride. Caius knew what he was talking about.

His mother, alas, took no interest in the siege of Plataea. While Caius was speaking she was using her eyes to some purpose. Suddenly she interrupted an admirable exposition of his tactical ideas with the unexpected question:

"Were you in the garden all the while?" The boy gave her a quick, sidelong glance. No, it was useless to lie.

"N-no," he said hesitatingly.

"You have been climbing the wall again? Playing with the boys in the street?"

"They were not the boys in the street," said Caius, quickly, in self-defence. "Cousin Cotta was there, and Scaevola . . . and the rest."

"And what were you doing?" Now his father joined in the cross-examination.

"Oh—playing." The situation was becoming more and more uncomfortable.

"Playing! And how did that come there?" His father's right forefinger followed the line of a fresh scratch on the boy's sunburnt cheek.

"Bibulus did that." He spoke as though the words were dragged from him.

"You were fighting?"

No answer.

"Were you fighting? Yes or no?" There was no mistaking his father's tone; he was angry.

The boy's indirect answer was a masterpiece of self-defence: "It was because I wouldn't let them speak ill of Uncle Marius."

The vertical furrow disappeared from his father's forehead. His expression was bland and impassive. Very quietly, he asked the boy: "Did Bibulus speak ill of Uncle Marius?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

Caius hesitated. Then, speaking clearly and precisely:

"That," he said, "I can't tell you."

"Why not?" The angry furrow appeared again. But Caius was quite unmoved.

"Because you would go to his father."

Quickly the aedile glanced at the boy. There was a barely perceptible and comprehending smile upon his firmly compressed lips. As though he were speaking to a grown man, and his equal—Caius flushed with pride—his father assured him:

"I give you my word that I won't go to his father. But you must tell me frankly everything that was said."

"He said it was a good thing that Sulla had cleared out the plebeians who came crowding into the city. And then . . ."

"Well, and you?"

"I gave him one or two for himself," replied Caius, with beautiful frankness. His mother quickly turned away, as though she had found something in one of the flower-beds that called for her attention.

"And then he scratched you?" his father's face was terribly severe—so stern that it was impossible to believe that the severity was genuine.

"Yes." The boy nodded contemptuously. "He is always scratching, the coward, and then I knocked him down." He looked up at his father, out of the corner of his eyes, as though he were not quite sure whether this last remark would not evoke an undesirable train of thought.

But his father was kindly as ever. "You deserve to be punished," he said. "But since you've been honest I will let you off. Another time don't go running out into the streets; then you won't have to listen to the nonsense of such a stupid boy." He concluded his speech with: "Now go indoors and wash your hands, and change your clothes."

"Yes, father." Thankful to have got off so easily, Caius made haste to disappear.

"Are you still afraid," he heard his mother ask, in her warm contralto, "that he will become a bookworm?"

"No," replied his father, in a tone of satisfaction. "The boy is going the right way; it's only that he needs the curb. But one day I think I shall be thankful—"

Caius heard no more. But this was enough to make him

swell with pride, and to inspire a firm resolve to give Bibulus a very thorough thrashing at their next encounter.

UNCLE MARIUS

With one last, firm grip, that threatened to tear half the skin of the back off the thin ribs, the old gladiator straightened his gigantic form with a sigh of satisfaction, and picked up a towel to wipe the oil from his fingers.

The thin, half-grown youth who raised himself painfully from the bench had a feeling as though all his bones had been broken by the merciless grip of the masseur. Benumbed and half-blinded, groping about him, he stood straddling on the stone flags.

A bucketful of ice-cold water, splashing upon his naked body, restored him to his senses. A second douche followed; then two gigantic paws, throwing a sheet over his breast and back, began to rub him dry.

"There!" said the giant at last. "And now, on with your armor! The time is getting on!"

Hastily Caius donned his tunic, laced up the stout soldier's boots, slipped his head into the leather jerkin, and drew on the heavy vizor'd helmet, which he strapped under his chin. Then, having thrust his hand into the gauntlet with its arm-shield, he was ready. Picking up his sword and buckler, he turned to face his teacher, who awaited him, already fully armed, the blunt practice-sword swinging negligently in his hand.

"Feint at the head, followed by thrust!" The menacing words came dully from the vizor of his adversary's helmet. "Engage!"

A feint at the crest of the helmet—a lunge—a quick recovery—another lunge—a thrust! A slight movement of the shield of his opponent, and his weapon glanced aside.

"Once more!"

Lunge—recovery—lunge—thrust!

"That's no good! Once more!"

Lunge—recovery—lunge—thrust!

It seemed as though the fencing-master had not moved his shield; nevertheless, the sword-point failed to reach its mark; it missed the mighty body by two good handbreadths, and Caius went sprawling after it.

"Take aim! Take aim!" cried the thundering voice. "You'd be dead already if we were really fighting! Once more now, with the parry of the following counter-stroke!"

Lunge—recovery—lunge—thrust—counter-stroke! He was only just in time to turn aside the sword with his small round shield.

Lunge—recovery—lunge—thrust! And the blow went home!

"That was better," came the booming voice from his adversary's helmet. "We'll just practise that a little."

A feint at the helmet—What lovely weather it is today—Recovery—And all the other boys have gone bathing—Thrust and counter-stroke!—If only he could have gone with them—Lunge—They are sure to be having a splendid time; Fabius—Lunge—Thrust and counter-stroke!—If only he could have gone with them—Lunge—They are sure to be having a splendid time; Fabius—Lunge—Thrust and counter-stroke!—Fabius will be playing his tricks and pretending he is a sea-monster—Recovery—And he has to stay here, taking this tiresome fencing-lesson—Thrust, lunge! And from this vulgar ruffian, who doesn't know a thing, and—Oh, that was a blow! His left shoulder is burning like fire. There will be a great weal there! He mustn't show that he feels it—Lunge—Recovery—Mustn't give the fellow the satisfaction of showing that one felt the pain—Thrust—Counter-stroke! If one clenched one's teeth hard it didn't hurt so much — Lunge — Recovery — Lunge — Thrust — Counter-stroke!

Where has the little girl come from?—Lunge—Recovery—What business has she here while—Thrust—Counter-stroke! —How frightened she looks! She can never—Recovery—Lunge—never have seen men fighting before—Counter-stroke!—or she wouldn't be so frightened—Lunge—Recovery

—Don't be afraid, little girl, nothing will happen to you—Caius smiled at her, without reflecting that his face was covered by the bars of the vizor.

Three mighty blows clashed down upon the bronze dome of his helmet, so that he fell back half-stunned.

"Look out for yourself!" roared the coarse voice of the fencing-master. "This is not the time to be looking at girls!" Thereupon Caius forgot time, and place, and the little girl, and everything else, and made a rush at the giant.

The latter stood amazed for a moment; then, with a snort of excitement, he swung his shield before his body and tightened the grip of his sword-hand. The youngster was like a wild-cat! Correct swordplay alternated with incorrect; strokes which had been learned with strokes invented on the spur of the moment; a very hailstorm of blows, with the edge and with the flat, rained upon the fencing-master; and some of them pierced his defence.

The old warrior began to lose his temper. He would show the youngster! If only he could get at him! But he was like an eel; he slipped away from under the sword, dodging to and fro; he was everywhere at the same time! If he could only get a blow or two home the boy wouldn't be able to keep it up!—A thrust! and again a thrust! A demon, a little demon!

Ringing laughter sounded from the vestibule, and cries of "Stop! Stop!"

Caius fell back, sobered, and turned his head. His father was standing in the vestibule, beaming all over his face, and beside him—Was it possible? Marius! Uncle Marius was back in Rome!

He threw down his sword and shield, slung the fencer's gauntlet from his hand, fumbled at the helmet-strap, loosened it, lifted the helmet from his head, and cast himself impetuously into the arms of the old lion.

"Uncle Marius!" he rejoiced. "Uncle Marius!"

And Uncle Marius hugged him to his breast until Caius felt his bones cracking, and then, seizing him by the shoul-

ders, he held the boy before him, scanning his face with sparkling eyes.

"You little tiger!" he laughed, proudly. And he turned to Caius' father. "What was that you were saying about an idle apprentice? The boy's a finished fighter!" "And an excellent fighter too!" added a third voice. Caius looked up. There was a third person in the vestibule; a short, broad-shouldered man with a fat face.

Marius glanced at the speaker. Still gripping the boy's shoulders, he shook them to and fro.

"We'll take him with us, Cinna," he cried, in a voice that sounded like a hoarse tuba; "next time we have a smack at Sulla, the accursed dog,"—and a wave of crimson flowed over the swarthy face,—"the aristocratic scoundrel! I'll tear the guts out of his body as I'd. . ."

Unconscious of what he was doing, he was shaking the half-grown youngster like a sack. Caius' father lay a soothing hand upon his arm; he stopped shaking the boy, and at last released him.

"Yes, yes," he growled. "I know, I know. But I've only to think of the ruffian, and the blood goes to my head." He looked round, and stared at the fencing-master, who had taken off his helmet, and stood waiting, with an abashed grin on his face. "And you!" cried Marius, and again his voice was like a hoarse tuba. "What do you think of him?"

The old gladiator bowed respectfully. "He couldn't be better, Consul!" he declared, eagerly. "A month or two more. . ."

"What, a month or two more!" Marius interrupted him brusquely. "The boy is finished, I tell you! Anything more would be too much. He has only got to learn to guard himself—and he can best learn that by serious fighting. "Here" —he fumbled in the wallet which he carried at his girdle, and threw the fencing-master a piece of gold, which the man caught adroitly. "There you are—be off with you!"

The fencing-master, bowing repeatedly, slunk away. Marius turned to his nephew.

"What am I going to get for liberating you from your tormentor?"

"I can never repay you sufficiently!" replied the boy, sincerely.

Marius laughed his booming laugh.

"I can well believe you!" he cried. "It's a hard school, but you'll be grateful to him yet for basting you so."

"Ho me dareis anthropos ou paideuetai," observed Cinna.

"Greek, eh?" interjected Marius, contemptuously. "Spare me that syrupy gibberish! The only thing I like about Greece is the wine!"

His brother laughed. "I dare say you are ready for that. You have only to come to the dining-room."

"Then Caius comes too!" cried Marius, laying his arm about the boy's shoulders.

A slight furrow appeared on his father's forehead.

"Caius will come later," he said, rather curtly. "I think too well of his courtesy to believe that he would leave Cornelia alone."

Cornelia? Caius looked round inquiringly.

"You do not yet know my daughter?" asked Cinna. He beckoned the child. "Cornelia, come here!"

Oh, it was the little girl! And she was still quite frightened; she stood in front of Caius with her chin pressed against her breast, playing with her fingers, and looking shyly up at him under her lashes. Caius magnanimously offered her his hand, which she shyly touched. Cinna, with the tips of his fingers, pushed the two towards one another.

"Go into the garden," he said, smiling, "and make friends with one another."

Only when he was back in the garden did Caius realize that he was still wearing his fencer's kit. Embarrassed and clumsy, he pulled the leather jerkin over his head. The soldier's boots he must wear for the present.

The little girl watched him in silence; but he felt that he ought perhaps to apologize for his appearance.

"I've just been training, you see," he explained. "One has to wear these things."

"I was so frightened!" she whispered.

"Pah!"—and he made a magnificent and contemptuous gesture—"I do that every day!"

"And aren't you a little bit afraid?"

"I, afraid? There is nothing to be afraid of!" he said, with a swaggering air.

"But if you are hit! It must hurt you dreadfully!"

"Not a bit," he lied. "One doesn't even feel it. Only today the fencing-master gave me a cut on the shoulder—but I didn't even notice it. There!" He pulled the tunic from his shoulder, and turning his head, squinted down at the place. Sure enough, the blow had raised a broad, blood-red weal. Good!

"No!" she whispered, with wide, astonished eyes. Cautiously she touched the shoulder with her finger-tips. "How dreadful!"

Sunning himself in her admiration, he drew the tunic up again. "You ought just to have seen me," he boasted, "when I used to fight with the street-boys!"

"I don't like the street-boys," she said, with a grimace. "They are always climbing on to our garden wall and putting out their tongues at me."

To this he had no answer. Such, after all, was the habit of street urchins. But the little girl saw nothing humorous in their behavior; she was frightened of them. He changed the subject.

"How did you get here?"

"Father brought me," she replied. "To see your mother."

"Oh, you came to see mother?"

"Yes. She was so kind to me. You must be very fond of your mother."

"I love my mother more than anyone in the world," he declared, very definitely; with the immediate reservation: "At least, I am just as fond of my father."

"I like her very much," she said, below her breath.

It gave him pleasure to hear her say so. He gave her a friendly glance. Her eyes were full of tears; her lips were quivering.

"And of course you are very fond of your mother?" he asked, benevolently.

"No," she replied, softly. "My mother died a long time ago." And now her tears were really falling.

Caius felt uncomfortable. It must be dreadful to have no mother. With a sudden rush of emotion, he caught at her hand.

"If the street-boys put out their tongues at you again," he said, "I'll give them something to remember!"

She looked up at him gratefully. "When I'm with you," she whispered, "I'm not a bit afraid!"

He nodded to her, and resolved to be quite exceptionally magnanimous. "Go back to my mother," he said. "You ought to go and see her again for a little while. I must join the men now. . ."

Uncle Marius was already slightly intoxicated when Caius entered the room. His iron hand was clasping the thin glass as though he meant to shatter it. He had reverted to his usual *bête noir*—Sulla—and was swearing lustily. His features were distorted with rage, but at the sight of Caius his brow cleared.

"Here's our warrior!" he shouted, excitedly. "Come to me, my boy!" And he flung his arm round his nephew. "A true son of Mars, eh? Would you like to serve the god of war?"

"Marius!" Again his father's hand fell on Uncle Marius' arm.

"All right!" growled Marius. "Your father is anxious about you," he said, smiling. "He thinks you are too young to go to war. Well, perhaps he is right. But you can serve Mars in Rome as well: I have the disposal of a few places in the College of Mars. Would you like one of them? In two years' time you can be consecrated Flamen Martialis."

Caius took no time to consider the proposal; he shook

his head emphatically, bending back to escape the vinous breath of the old man.

"No!" he said.

"Oh—why not?"

"Because Mars is not the first of the gods."

Marius laughed until he choked.

"I like the boy!" he cried. "The second best will never do for him! No, no!" And as Caius' father was on the point of interrupting him, he waved him off impatiently. "The boy is quite right. I will see what arrangement can be made with the College of Jupiter."

YOUTH

THE wild clamor of the market-place died away. The deep and solemn peace of the sacred street surrounded the two young men as they slowly approached the Temple of Jupiter. They were of the same age, and both, apparently, were but newly invested with the *toga virilis*. But their every movement was full of the imperturable patrician dignity which nature and breeding had made part of their very being. Their very similarity of bearing was eloquent of it; the right hand of each was thrust into the breast of his toga, while the left arm hung negligently at his side. They might almost have been two soldiers of a white-clad, peaceful army, patrolling the streets of the capital.

Fabius was the first to break the silence. Glancing back along the street through which they had passed:

"How they are screaming and gesticulating and working themselves into a frenzy! The rabble are behaving as though everyone were not aware that the fate of Rome has not long been decided elsewhere."

Julius tossed his head. "Their own fault," he said, briefly.

"Yes," nodded Fabius. "They should not have allowed the sharks to grow so big. Now that the one is dead the other will swallow the whole market at a single gulp." He stopped, and suddenly laughed. "Pardon my disrespectful manner of

expressing myself. I had quite forgotten that Marius was your uncle. Have I annoyed you?"

"Nonsense!" replied Julius, carelessly. "For one thing, you are perfectly right. The only thing that I find deplorable is this sudden capitulation to the worshipful Sulla."

"What else was left for them to do? Fimbria's troops have gone over, and he himself is dead; the Consuls, Carbo, and your father-in-law, for whom, as far as that goes, I have the greatest respect, are thankful to be alive. Metellus, Crassus, and Pompeius are on Sulla's side. What were the rest to do?"

Julius gazed into the distance with sparkling eyes.

"Hannibal too besieged Rome, and was destroyed."

"I am not aware," said Fabius, with a sidelong, ironical glance, "that soothsaying is one of the functions of the priesthood of Jupiter. Do you perhaps propose to mobilize your colleagues, most reverent sir?"

So grotesque was the idea that Julius burst our laughing. Involuntarily he pictured the fat and uncouth Laenas, the nervous and excited Scaevola, in full panoply of war, marching down the Appian Way to encounter Sulla.

"No," he said, still smiling. "All the less, inasmuch as my relations with my colleagues are of the most frigid possible nature. Uncle Marius made a priest of me, just as Cinna made me a husband."

"And therefore?"

"And therefore you are right: Sulla is lord of Rome because the destiny of Rome has so ordained. Or rather because all those whose vocation it was to rule renounced that vocation without a struggle. No man's case is hopeless unless he himself gives up the battle."

For a time they walked on together in silence. Then Fabius resumed his argument—with a decision that seemed a little too emphatic:

"And I even think it fortunate that destiny has so ordained."

"So do I," said Julius, drily.

"Truly?" There was a note of surprise and pleasure in the exclamation. "I am heartily glad to hear you say so!"

"Perhaps a little too soon," retorted Julius, with a faint smile. "We shall see. But first of all, tell me why you regard Sulla's victory as fortunate?"

"There can be no question of that," said Fabius, almost explosively. "Because any jumped-up proletarian will no longer try to push himself into a position where the welfare of the Republic may depend upon his decision; the government is at last returning to those who have the right to rule; to the patricians and the senators. And for that very reason I am glad, Caius, that you, a scion of one of the oldest, one of the noblest families, are at last finding your way back to your equals in rank. . ."

Julius laid his hands on the speaker's arm.

"Softly!" he said. "Not so fast! Now let me say a word. You will be thankful that I interrupted you." With some difficulty he suppressed a smile, and did his best to assume a grave and dignified bearing; with the result that he grimaced as though he had bitten a sour fruit. And his words were in tune with his grimace: "Your verdict is correct, but incomplete: for it is not only the presumption of the jumped-up proletarians, as you call them, that is disastrous, but also, and far more so, that of the selfish, empty-headed, arrogant, not to say corrupt aristocracy. And for that reason I regard the advent of Sulla as a good thing. Whether his government inclines to the right or to the left—whether he sets up a popular government or rules through the Senate—it is all one to me; the point is that at last there is a man at the head of affairs who dares to act vigorously." He came to a sudden standstill at the steps of the Temple of Jupiter, and held out his hand to Fabius, who felt as though he had been slapped in the face. "I have something to see to here. Goodbye, Marcus, and thanks for your company." Without waiting for a reply, he ascended the broad steps with the professional dignity of the *flamen Dialis*.

Halfway up the steps he halted, looking northwards across

the valley to the slopes of the Quirinal and the Viminal. At his feet lay the Suburra with its tenements, seething and humming with life, day and night; and before him, in the midst of their spacious parks, half concealed by their great overshadowing trees, rose the villas and palaces of the nobles and the plutocrats. He took in the prospect with a single glance, that overlooked nothing. His gaze shifted towards the left, to the shining temple crowning the steep and gloomy height of the Capitol. The old saying recurred to him: "It is but a step from the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock." Smiling, he repeated the words under his breath. A short step, he thought, for all who fail to understand their age; who venture where they should hesitate, and hesitate where they should be bold. That is the profoundest secret of all success. Cornelius, before whom the city now prostrates itself, understands this as few have understood it; heedless of party squabbles or governmental decrees, he pursued his campaign, gradually winning the devotion of his soldiers, until army and leader were one: one thought, one will, one strength. And now this monstrous projectile, shattering all defences with its irresistible impulse, is hurling itself on Rome.

Slowly Julius turned again to face the temple, and deep in thought he completed his ascent of the steps, turning to the left when he at last reached the platform.

From the shadow of the pillars a figure emerged, and a voice hailed him:

"Master!"

He turned his head. It was one of the house-slaves; a grey-headed Spaniard, who had been in the service of his family ever since Julius could remember.

"You?" he asked, in astonishment. Suddenly he noted the man's quivering lips, the tears brimming in his eyes. He started, and a sudden fear stabbed at his heart like a red-hot needle. "What is it?" He rapped out the words.

The slave drew nearer, bowing low and stretching out his arms; he fell on his knees before Julius, grasped the hem of the young man's toga with trembling hands, and pressed it

to his lips. He broke into a desperate sobbing that convulsed his whole body and choked his utterance. "Master! Young master!" was all he could say.

The young man stooped and seized him by the shoulder.

"What is it?" he repeated, in a collected tone.

The firm grasp and the quiet words restored the old man's self-control. He raised his tearful face, and stammered:

"The master—Oh, misery!"

"My father?" Despite his rigid self-control, the words were a cry of agony. The slave nodded.

Then Julius, forgetting the dignity of a priest and patrician, girt up his toga with a single twitch, and with long strides tore down the steps he had just ascended. The old man followed him as fast as his trembling limbs would carry him.

On the way home Julius learned the essential facts from the slave. The praetor had, as usual, proceeded to the courthouse, but once there he had complained of illness; nevertheless, he refused to adjourn the case before him and return home. He had spoken only a few words when he suddenly sprang up and tore his tunic open; his breath rattled in his throat, and he collapsed. Those who rushed to his assistance gazed into the glazing eyes of a man already dead.

"Where is he now?" Julius asked.

"At home. We brought him home."

"So my mother knows already. . ."

"It was she who sent me for you."

They had reached the house. With awe the old man noted that his young lord's features, but lately distorted by grief, were now composed into a stony mask, that smoothed out all expression, and constrained them to a solemn and impersonal stillness.

Drawing himself up to his full height, the young man crossed the threshold with a slow and measured tread. . .

The door-keeper had already begun to approach him with the loud lamentation which, to his thinking, befitted the

occasion: but before the unapproachable gravity of this living statue he shrank back again, and crept silently into his cell.

In the vestibule the young man's mother came to meet him: grave and dignified as himself. The first greeting came from her, as she bowed her noble head before the new lord of the Julian house. Calmly, with a slow and reserved gesture, he thanked her. Then, carefully divesting himself of the folds of the toga, he let it slip to the ground, and received from his mother's hands the black garment of mourning.

No words were exchanged. Moving silently beside him, she pointed to the hall. Side by side they entered, perfectly self-controlled, as though they were crossing the threshold of a sanctuary.

In the hall the new lord of the house was greeted by his young wife; on her round, childish face was an expression of timidity and awe. It was apparent, from her figure, that in a few months' time she would be a mother. She was standing at the foot of the bier, and this strange juxtaposition of germinating life and death made the solemn grief of the moment more poignant by the almost uncanny contrast. As he had greeted his mother, so, with slow and impersonal gestures, the husband acknowledged his young wife's greeting. As he passed her, she silently stepped aside, with a sound that was like an unconscious sigh. In the middle of the hall, which was lighted through an opening in the roof, he stood in silence before his father's corpse.

The bier had been covered with a purple, gold-embroidered pall, and spread with the finest linen, and flowers from the garden had been strewn upon it. And there lay the praetor, the father of Caius Julius Caesar, taking his last rest. He was wrapped in his robes of office, which bore the insignia of his senatorial rank and patrician descent. A garland of leaves, the token of his valiant service as a soldier, surrounded the pale forehead. His eyes were closed; his features wore a peaceful and almost cheerful expression, as though

he had completed a long and heavy task, and was now rejoicing in the rest which he had won.

Julius drew near to the bier, looking down in silence on his dead father. His mother and his wife remained in the background, as though unwilling to disturb the silent colloquy of the living and the dead. To the youth it seemed as though the whole wide world held no one but himself and the pallid figure lying in state before him. His heart was heavy with a thousand sad, unspoken words. He recalled the untiring solicitude of the dead, his profound charity, his sensitive understanding for the thoughts and actions of his son, however confused and erratic. He wished that he could thank his father, once for all, for his innumerable acts of kindness; and he knew that it was now too late, that he would never again meet the warm and kindly glance of his father's eyes, would never again feel the firm, quiet hand upon his shoulder.

A scalding agony rose in his throat, seeking relief in a childish and convulsive sobbing. He suppressed it with a supreme effort as he suppressed the quivering of his lips, and all external signs of his emotion. Again with a supreme effort, he drew himself up to his full height. Again the burning pulse of agony rose into his throat, and he knew that his endurance was nearly at an end. With a solemn and ample gesture he grasped his toga and drew it over his head, veiling his face, that was now distorted by his uncontrollable grief.

HUNTED

From the wattled hut a narrow, winding path, some hundred and fifty yards in length, ran through the reeds and rushes, over the wet, swampy ground, which yielded gently to the tread, and released the foot with a soft, sucking sound. From the end of the track a man could obtain an unobstructed view of the wide, swampy region, which stretched away to the horizon, unbroken by a single tree. No bird sang here, no beast moved amidst the rushes; but swarms of midges danced in the quivering air, whose lethargic foulness was

from time to time stirred by a hot, eddying breath. The warm, luxuriant grasses were interspersed with rank weeds and occasional flowers. Above the plain was stretched the unchanging blue of the vast dome of the sky, from which a white-hot sun rained down its pitiless rays.

Julius released the rushes which his hands had parted, and they clashed softly together as he turned to regain the hut. His hands were thin, and cold as ice, and under the earth-brown skin the veins were gorged with blood. Shuddering, he drew his coarse, tattered mantle more closely about him; despite the heat of the sun he was chilled to the very marrow. Only his head was burning, and his temples were throbbing with intolerable pain; his head was gripped by an iron ring, mercilessly crushing the bones; he was sick with the Campagna fever.

The path seemed endless. Always, just as he expected to catch sight of the hut, the track turned aside, leading yet further into the wilderness of rushes. In its disheartening sameness it reminded one of the ancient tales of labyrinths through which the wanderer, vainly seeking an outlet, groped in despair until exhaustion put an end to his sufferings. Something of this despair overtook the young man as he dragged himself forward, painfully setting one foot before the other. With both hands he grasped the stems of the rushes, breaking them as he laboured onwards, with a dull and sullen rage, which drove him forward even though his will was no longer at work.

Here was the hut at last. He flung open the low door, and passed into the twilight of the one dark room. The air was heavy and stifling, but the roof at least protected him from the rays of the sun which had beaten down so cruelly on his uncovered head. He lowered himself on to a bed of dried maize-leaves, and stared before him.

For three weeks now he had fled from place to place, from refuge to refuge. Never able to rest; never secure; always on the alert, always ready to continue his flight—to any place of concealment which seemed likely to afford him a few

hours' breathing-space. What sleep was like, real and profound sleep, he had almost forgotten in these three breathless weeks. His only nourishment had consisted of wild berries, of fruit stolen by night from the peasants' orchards, of roots pulled from the peasants' fields. Once or twice friends in Rome had succeeded in sending him food by the hands of secret messengers: dried meat, that his weakened digestion could hardly tolerate; bread, that was hard as stone before it reached him, so that he had to soak it in the turbid water of the marsh before he could eat it. The news which reached him with such provisions was anything but consoling; Sulla was breaking the last remnants of the opposition by a series of ferocious edicts. The delation of Julius was only one of thousands; the whole land was given over to murder and incendiarism; senators, knights and tribunes of the people who were guilty of opposing the dictatorship, or were merely suspected of opposition, had been butchered by the hundred, without legal trial or the slightest attempt at justification. Whole troops of myrmidons had recruited themselves, Sulla's voluntary bloodhounds, and were now scouring Italy, in order to execute the murderous commands of their omnipotent lord and enrich themselves by secret rapine. Such mischief as the wine-fed madness of Marius had wreaked upon the nobility was more than doubled by Sulla's coldly calculated terrorism. Today there were only two classes in Rome: the hunters and the hunted, the executioners and the proscribed.

Julius tossed and turned upon his couch, seeking the sleep that had fled him for three long weeks. He was so infinitely weary that all thoughts, all desires were effaced, save only the one longing to rest, to be able once more to lie down and stretch out his limbs without the eternal vigilance, the incessant anxiety of the last three weeks. Dimly he thought of his mother, of his young wife and his daughter, only six months old, whom he had been forced to leave behind him in the witches' cauldron of the capital. Would he ever see them again? With a vague sense of horror he felt that even

the answer to this question left him indifferent; physically and morally he was at the end of his tether; his whole nature, revolting in frantic egoism against his better self, demanded only silence, peace and rest. Slowly the thoughts that tormented him were dispersed; the first veil of slumber was already falling. . .

The baying of a hound! Distant indeed, but enough to rouse Julius from the half-slumber into which he had fallen. With a start he sat up; and in a moment he was bathed in a cold sweat that oozed from every pore. Terror crept upwards towards his heart. Now they had him!

Again the baying of the hound—and now it was nearer; the beast must be following the scent that would lead him to the hut. And this knowledge suddenly restored to him the use of his limbs. He rushed to the door, and summoning all his remaining strength, swung the heavy bar into position. Stumbling back to his couch, he groped in the heap of maize-leaves that had served him as pillow, and drew forth a stiletto. Tottering over to the wall, he leant against it, his eyes starting from his head, his fingers clenched on the hilt of the dagger. One thought alone possessed his disordered brain: "They shall not take me alive!"

The patter of a galloping hound, and its breathless panting . . . a growl, then a furious baying . . . the wild, yelling cry of the hound at stand upon the scent. . . Again . . . Then steps; and a hand shook the door; and a voice cried:

"Open!"

Silence. The young man contracted his muscles and held his breath. "They shall not have me alive!" he thought.

Again the door was shaken. A fist thundered on the boards.

"Open, man! It's no use! Open!"

Silence. . .

An eternity. . . "They don't get me alive!"

Silence. . .

A rending crash; a second, a third; an axe was at work. A splintered plank flew into the room; then another.

In the breach a distorted face. Between the bare teeth, the short stabbing-sword. Beneath the face the head of the hound; the bloodshot eyes, the yelping jaws, the flapping tongue.

Suddenly, in the eyes of the aggressor, a look of astonishment, of hesitation. His features relaxed; a hand sought the hilt of the sword, and drew the weapon from the vise of the clenched teeth.

"Caesar? You?"

On Julius' features was the same look of amazement. His tense muscles relaxed.

"Catilina?"

Again every muscle grew tense. "You shall not take me alive!"

Catilina fell back.

"Nonsense, Caesar. I am your good friend."

Julius hesitated; his eyes never left Catilina's face.

"I am your friend," repeated Sergius, impatiently. "On my word of honor! Open the door!—Down, Barcas!" The last words were addressed to the hound, whose head instantly vanished. Slowly, still wholly stupefied, Caesar moved heavily to the door, threw back the bar, and tore it open.

Sergius entered, carelessly tossing his sword on to the bed, glanced round the hut, and offered Caesar his hand.

"What are *you* doing here?"

The bloodhound had followed his master; he threw himself down on the floor, breathing quickly, with hanging tongue.

"Proscribed," Caesar made answer.

"You too? Why?"

"Because I would not consent to a divorce."

"Because you—To be sure, your wife is Cinna's daughter! Yes, Sulla knows how to hate—even beyond the grave." Once more he glanced round the hut. "Is this the whole of your palace? It is not a princely lodging!"

A shrug of the shoulders: "I have known worse."

Catilina gave him a searching look. "Are you ill?"

Caesar nodded.

"Swamp fever—nothing to eat—bad water—"

Catilina reflected. He felt at his hip, and untied a flask.

"Here—drink!"

Caesar drank: a long draught. Wine! Warm and comforting, it glowed through his viens.

Sergius, sitting on the couch, was playing with a maize-stalk.

"You were foolish," he said, positively.

"Why?"

"Because you did not obey Sulla. Look at Pompeius: he did, and now he is in high favor." Catilina laughed. "Do you know what he had the impudence to say recently? Sulla had reprimanded him for some arbitrary act; and Pompeius replied: 'Yet more people worship the rising than the setting sun!' "

Caesar sat down beside Sergius.

"What is happening out there—among you?"

Catilina waved his hand.

"Terrible things!—Do you know how much head-money Sulla is paying? Twelve thousand denarii! I have made a fortune in the shambles. Unhappily it all goes into the maw of the moneylenders."

"Have many been sacrificed?"

"Well, you can imagine what has happened; three or four thousand in all—patricians and plutocrats; especially the plutocrats; there was something to be made out of that." He laughed; an evil laugh. "Sulla," he said, suddenly changing the subject, "has had the signs of Marius' triumph in the Capitol torn down. The fragments are still lying there: no one may touch them, on pain of death. He has even had his grave torn open, and his ashes scattered in the Anio. Yes, the man knows how to hate."

"Do you know anything of my people?"

"No," replied Catilina. "But you need have no anxiety: nothing has happened to them, or I should have heard of it.

The Cottas will have been looking after them. And it is really safer now in Rome than elsewhere."

With an almost inaudible sigh, Julius gazed fixedly at the ground.

"Drink some more wine," said Sergius, in a tone of encouragement. And as Caesar lifted the flask to his lips, his visitor continued:

"And what do you think of doing? How do you see the future?"

Caesar set down the flask. "I don't know," he said in a tone of profound depression.

Catilina looked at him out of the corners of his eyes.

"Well, what if you chose to be submissive?" he suggested, reflectively.

The other shook his head; his lips were firmly compressed.

"Very well: you won't. What then?"

Caesar slowly unclasped his hands, and examined the open palms.

"My kinsfolk have sent me word that they have taken steps to approach Sulla; there seems to be some hope. . ."

Sergius stood up, and even as he did so the bloodhound rose to its feet.

"Well, that simply means waiting—yes, I must leave you now. Stay quietly here: I will see that nothing happens to you. And if I have any news from Rome, I will let you know. Farewell, Caesar." He held out his hand.

For a fraction of a second Julius hesitated to take the bloodstained hand: the hand of an executioner. But the man had done him a kindness; and he laid his earth-brown, feverish hand in the sinewy, over-long fingers of Catilina.

Sergius nodded his head, picked up his sword, whistled to his hound, and took his departure.

Caesar gazed after him until the rushes had closed behind him; then he turned back into the hut. The unaccustomed draught of wine on an empty stomach had set his head in a whirl. With two heavy steps he reached his couch, and fell

prostrate. Next moment he was fast asleep: it was his first sound sleep in three weeks.

SULLA

THE Dictator sat bowed over his endless columns of figures. His body-slave approached him on tiptoe, and whispered, with the smile of a favorite, and, at the same time, with all the boundless contempt of his lackey's soul for the visitor, who was merely a pardoned proscript:

"Julius is here, my lord."

The Dictator did not glance up at the words. His eyes restlessly wandered up and down the columns of the figures, comparing sums and values. Dryly and curtly, hardly moving his thin lips:

"Let him wait," he said.

The slave silently disappeared. The Dictator continued to check his accounts.

The visitor stood in the hall without, examining the paintings on the walls and the ancestral busts with a calm and impenetrable gaze. He knew that every movement was watched by scornful, mocking, malicious eyes, and he had no mind to be a spectacle for lackeys.

At last there was a vibrant clang of metal from the Dictator's workroom. The yellow-skinned Syrian ran in, came out again, nodded carelessly toward the curtain, and was about to withdraw.

A barely perceptible gesture from the visitor nailed him to the floor. Carelessly, almost wearily, Julius raised his hand, and pointed to the curtain; and his hand remained uplifted. In his eyes, the eyes of a ruler, was a cold, metallic glitter. Cringingly the Syrian crept forward, and pulled back the curtain. With measured tread Julius passed through the doorway, and halted with a silent greeting. Heavily the curtain fell into place behind him.

At last the Dictator seemed to be satisfied with his reckoning. He threw down his stylus. He leaned back in comfort, and looked at Julius with narrowed eyes.

"So the lord Caius Julius Caesar has at last done me the honor . . ." he said, in a dry, mocking tone. He had a thin, whistling voice: the hoarse, broken voice of an old campaigner. Sulla, thought Julius involuntarily, must have done a good deal of shouting in his time.

"At your orders, Dictator," he said.

Sulla smiled; and his smile too was thin and worn.

"Which means, I suppose, that otherwise I should not have had the pleasure of seeing you—eh?" The narrow eyes opened more widely, and the voice sank an octave. Now there was a certain power and fullness in it; a last echo of the old thunder. "You have courage, at all events." His hand, a slender, carefully-tended hand, like the hand of a woman, pointed to a chair. Julius sat down.

"I sent word for you to come," began the Dictator, without further circumlocution, "because I wanted to make up my mind about you." He turned over the sheets on his writing-table, and drew forth a bundle of documents at which he glanced from time to time during the conversation that followed. "The motives of the others are comprehensible; they gnashed their teeth at me because hyenas have no liking for the tiger that robs them of their prey. I do not think that this was your motive. And indeed, I have asked myself in vain what induced you to oppose me."

"I did not oppose you, Dictator." This was a quiet, matter-of-fact statement; no excuse.

Again the thin, piping voice.

"Not directly, of course, or you assuredly would not be sitting before me now. But you disregarded my commands; you refused to obey them."

A faint flush rose into the young man's cheeks.

"You are referring to my divorcing Cornelia?"

"I am referring to your divorcing the daughter of my enemy Cinna," said Sulla in a decisive tone. "I will speak frankly to you, Caesar. I meant well by you. I know the whole Marian pack by heart; I have had dealings with the old man almost all my life. I asked myself: What does an

aristocrat look to gain by such a relationship?" (I—I—I—thought Julius). "Perhaps"—there was a twinkle in the short-sighted eyes—"Perhaps I had another connection in view for you. By your opposition you made it impossible for me to help you. More: by your foolish obstinacy you compelled me to take the severest measures. Need you have done so?"

"Dictator"—began Julius, hesitating.

Once more Sulla interrupted him.

"I want an honest answer from you, Caesar," he insisted. "Otherwise you had better be silent."

"You shall have an honest answer, Dictator," replied Julius, firmly, raising his small, shapely head. "Permit me first of all to inform you that my refusal to obey you had nothing to do with my relations to the party of Marius."

"Indeed!" interjected the old man, with irony.

"No!" The contradiction was so emphatic that the Dictator looked up in astonishment. "My marriage was, it is true, of a political nature, but it very quickly developed into a human relationship, a communion of the closest character. It was that fact alone, and no political after-thought of any kind whatever, that impelled me to disobey you."

"Sheer obstinacy, then? Self-importance, shall I say?"

"No," replied Julius, again with quiet decision. "A sense of decency. Chivalry, if you will. I could not fail the child of seventeen who, after her father's murder, saw in me her only protector, and depended on me. That would have been worse than cowardly; it would have been despicable."

"Tatata!" The old man wagged his hand to and fro. "Big words. Nothing would have happened to the poor, defenceless child; I have never made war on women."

"Not you, Dictator," replied Julius, coldly. "But your . . . those who executed your will were less delicate, less sensitive. For them there was only one motive for their actions. Not: How shall I establish peace in Rome—"

"But what?"

"But: How shall I settle my debts." The old man attempted

to interrupt him, but Julius gave him no opportunity. "Need I tell you of the hundreds of cases in which whole families were exterminated, because they were wealthy, because your executioners saw a chance of profit? Do you not know that many of your partisans who were head over ears in debt before the proscriptions are now living in wealth and comfort? Do you not know that in certain circles your proscriptions were known as 'the great settlement'?"

Silence. Sulla sat crouching in his chair, his fingers convulsively clutching its arms. Under his deeply-lined brows his eyes were glittering malevolently. He looked for all the world as though he were about to fly at the young man's throat.

"You have asked for an honest answer, Dictator. I have given it."

The words fell into the silence like drops of water into vacancy.

The Dictator sat motionless, his eyes fixed upon those of Julius, who quietly and composedly returned his gaze. He knew that his head had never sat more loosely on his shoulders than it did at that moment. A minute passed; two; three . . .

At last the voice spoke again, shrill and piping:

"And—the rest?"

"What do you mean, Dictator?"

"You have given me the first half of the answer," insisted Sulla. "I asked you: What had a Caesar to expect from the Marians? For you will hardly persuade me that your relations to that rabble, the people's party, went no further than your billing and cooing with your wife. What, then, were you looking for? Answer me!" The last words were spoken with explosive force.

The answer Julius gave was so unexpected that the Dictator started back in amazement:

"I commit myself to nothing by stroking the ass that is to carry me."

Again there was silence, but the tension in the air was relaxed.

After a while the piping voice came again from the old man's mouth; and was there a suppressed chuckle in the words?

"What do you mean?"

Now at last the quiet gaze moved from the Dictator's face. Casually examining the finger-nails of his left hand, that lay upon his knee—his right arm was hanging loose—Caesar explained, composedly:

"I need power, Dictator, and I mean to obtain it.

"The official paths are so cumbered with professional politicians, all banded together for their mutual advantage, that I had no prospect of getting to the top within a reasonable space of time. To say nothing of the fact that it would have involved me in obligations which would have robbed me of my freedom of decision. For that reason I looked about for another way, and I found it in the people's party. Marius is dead; father and son are dead; with Cinna, Fimbria, Flaccus, Norbanus and the rest. Those who are still alive are trembling before you, and dare hardly breathe. I am the only heir to the Marian tradition: it is my one great political opportunity. Should I be so foolish or so cowardly as to surrender it without more ado?"

"And if I were to command you?"

"Then I should obey—and wait."

"For what?"

"For an event of which only the time of its occurrence is uncertain."

Far from being disagreeably affected—Sulla, who professed to be an Epicurean and a Stoic, was by profession indifferent to death—the old man secretly appreciated the tactician whose counterstroke followed so instantly upon his parry. The youthful fire of his adversary aroused him. There was something almost like satisfaction in his voice as he asked:

"And what use do you propose to make of your power, supposing you succeed in attaining it?"

Julius reflected. Then he asked:

"Will you permit me to answer that by another question?"

"Well?"

"When you set out from Brundisium, on your march on Rome, did you already know what you would do with the State when you had conquered it?"

The old man chuckled inwardly.

"Not so bad!" he nodded in acknowledgment. "But while you still owe me an answer to my question, I will give you the answer to yours; I knew that I meant to restore order."

"I have no other intention," said Julius, calmly.

"Oh! So you don't think that what I have done is enough? Perhaps too little blood has been shed to please you?"

"Too much." The young man's eyes were wide and deep-set. "But perhaps it was not the blood that should have been shed. You have swept away the little gods of the market, but you have left the greater deities of the Curia. They are humble nowadays, because Jupiter is armed with thunderbolts. But when the weapon falls from his hand they will bear themselves more proudly than ever. And then, woe to Rome!"

Sulla raised his head as he listened to the last few words. Slowly he asked:

"And where do you look for salvation?"

"To the rule of a strong man." The reply came instantly; each word like a hammer-stroke.

"And if there is no strong man?"

"There will be one if he is needed."

Twilight was falling, softening all harsh outlines, weaving its delicate web over all things, even men's thoughts. Sulla rose, went up to Julius, laid his hand on the young man's forehead, bent his head back and looked deep into his eyes. It was long before he looked away.

"Do you know what I told your kinsfolk when they came to beg you off? 'So the boy is tied to a woman's petticoat.

But I warn you: there is more than a Marius in the fellow'!"

* * * * *

The fat, yellow Syrian gasped when he saw the Dictator and the former proscript emerge from the sanctum side by side. He made a movement as though he was about to prostrate himself on the floor, but he contented himself with making the profoundest possible reverence.

Sulla accompanied his guest to the door of the hall. Then he halted, and lifted his hand in greeting:

"Vale, Caesar!"

TWO WREATHS

THE young Roman envoy sat in the seat of honor, at the king's right hand. The ample Greek robe fell into unaccustomed folds over the thin, sinewy limbs of the young soldier, and the wreath of brightly-colored, full-blown roses contrasted strangely with the narrow, serious countenance beneath it, whose large eyes were keenly and composedly aware of every object and every person in the spacious, pillared banqueting-hall.

King Nicomedes was exerting himself to please his guest. The prelude of the night's entertainment had been a banquet, whose succession of choice and rare dishes tickled even the jaded palates of the Asiatic Greek epicures; now, the tables being cleared, the king's cellarer had brought up his finest wines: vintages of Cyprus, Chios and Tenedos, and noblest of all, a dark red Lesbian wine that was more than a hundred years old; thick as syrup as it flowed from the amphora, and so sweet that the candied fruit and roseleaves that followed it were tasteless. In this Lesbian vintage Nicomedes had toasted his guest: its grapes—the king declared—had been trodden in the year of the famous battle of Zama, and the king spoke of the honorable part which one of his guest's ancestors had borne in that action: the praetor Sextus Julius Caesar. The king was well versed in the history of Rome, and in that of the Julian house, and paraded his knowledge in

honor of his guest. The latest Julius, he adroitly remarked, had been given none of those names that have a purely numerical significance: such as Quintus, Sextus, Decimus. And rightly so; for the only name that would have befitted him was Primus, the first.

"Permit me," concluded the king, in his finely-turned Ionian phrases, "permit me to forecast the destiny of our beloved guest: may I not say, of my beloved friend, Caius Caesar? I see"—and here even as the speaker raised his voice he skilfully assumed the solemn accents of a priest delivering an oracle—"I see a future in which mighty Rome, the mistress of the world, will lie at his feet; I see an age of magnificent progress, an age replete with all imaginable blessings, the gift of his inexhaustibly generous hand. But I see still further, into the remotest periods, into a time when unknown peoples shall have entered into our inheritance; I see that they too are grateful to our whilom guest, and Caesar is the great name which to them is at once an ideal and a lodestar! We will drink, my friends, to the fulfilment of this prophecy! *Quod bonum, faustum, felix fortunatumque sit!*" From his pliant lips the Latin came over-smoothly and a trifle slurred.

The guest knew well enough that these compliments were no more than phrases; fair words in the Grecian fashion; one must not look too closely at their content; none the less, he was singularly moved. A faint flush reddened his sunburned cheeks as he raised his goblet to drink with the king.

The king leaned over toward his guest.

"Do me the honor," he said, courteously, "to retain the poor beaker out of which you are drinking as a trifling gift in remembrance of this day."

The young man's gaze fell on the heavy goblet of massive beaten gold, encrusted with many gems. He flushed a deeper red.

"King," he replied, "it is too much. You overwhelm me with gifts. This morning the magnificent ivory statuette—"

Nicomedes interrupted him.

"Say no more, if you would not wound me! For the happi-

ness of having won your friendship all my treasuries were not too great a price to pay!"

Julius bowed in silence. The king's manner of speech both repelled and attracted him. The phrases were over-luxuriant, but the construction was impeccable. One must find the mean between this flowery opulence and the matter-of-fact aridity of the Roman orator. When he had settled these Asiatic affairs he might perhaps attend the course in rhetoric of Milon of Rhodes?

Music recalled him from his meditations; a sweet, windy note. There in the hall stood a young girl, erect as the archaic statue of a goddess, the double flute at her lips.

Her opening theme was, perhaps, a folk-melody. The long-drawn phrases rose from the lightest whisper to a moderate strength, and sank again to a whisper. Smoothly the melancholy notes floated out upon the deathly stillness of the hall.

Now she began a variation. The plaintive melody seemed slowly to awake to life, developing itself in trills and modulations, accompanied by short impatient cadences in the deeper notes of the second flute. It was as though a child were dancing across the meadows, while its nurse ran after it, scolding, and seeking in vain to catch it.

But now the trills and grace-notes were silenced as the melody developed its full volume, breaking into a vigorous measure, while the accompaniment wove around it a network of runs and embellishments. The song challenged and implored; peremptorily it knocked upon the hearer's heart, compelling it to open in surrender to the passionate notes.

And now at last the player revealed the whole perfection of her skill; both flutes took up the theme, and played with it as with a ball, tossing it from one to the other, throwing it up in unison, and then again each going its own way; it was as though a pair of lovers were dancing a measure that dissolved into numberless intricate steps and figures. And then, in the end, it was as though they found one another; and together, preserving the same interval, they poured forth the melody, in harmony, all besprinkled with trills and runs.

Once more the flute-player took up the theme; the alto flute repeated it quietly, in lingering cadences, like a drowsy old man; the soprano danced round its comrade, seeming to whisper its gay and delicate memories; but all in vain. Quieter and quieter grew the voice of the leading flute; now it was only a whisper; and now a silence . . .

A storm of applause rose, fell, and rose again; the flute-player bowed, and vanished.

Now only did Julius realize that an unfamiliar emotion was constricting his bosom; suffocating yet blissful. Hitherto he had had no time to experience desire; now it seized him with twofold vigor, though he knew not what it was that he desired; and the tension of his nerves relaxed.

Again there was a silence. An elderly man had entered the hall; his eyes were full of keen intelligence, and yet they were in some way veiled. Nicomedes leaned toward his guest.

"My best extempore poet," he explained, smiling. "Now you shall hear something!"

The poet bowed profoundly.

"What is the king's behest?" he asked submissively.

"Sing a song to our guest," replied the sovereign.

The old man glanced quickly at Caesar, and again bowed.

"What measure? Hexameters? Distiches? Alcaics? Antilochian verse?"

"Sapphic strophes," commanded Nicomedes.

The poet drew back, closed his eyes for a moment, then gazed up at the ceiling, and began:

> "Now has Helios guided his chariot earthward,
> Has a star declined from the paths of heaven,
> Or has a godhead favored us in kindness,
> Wandering among us?"

Julius, beginning to feel a little overcome by the incense lavished upon him, paid no attention to the frictionless flow of rhythm. The smooth jingle of verse, in which a little spark of thought flashed out from time to time, became unspeakably monotonous and soporific. He leaned his heavy head on

his right hand, and passed his left across his eyes, which were inclined to close.

The king was watching him.

"It does not please you," he said. "You are right; it is poor stuff, and unworthy of you. I will have the bungler whipped out of the palace."

Caesar looked up: amazed and aghast.

"Why?" he asked. "The man is doing his best. It is only that . . . all this praise . . ." He saw the furrow between the king's eyebrows, and continued eagerly: "I beg that you will not be angry. The fault is mine alone."

Nicomedes smiled his smooth Grecian smile.

"Good; at your desire he shall be absolved from punishment. But he shall not weary us longer.—Away—Be off!" he cried above the tide of verse.

The old man broke off, saw the threat in the king's eyes, and made haste to disappear.

"I am perhaps overtired," said Julius, further to excuse the unhappy poet. "Permit me to withdraw."

The king, once more in the best of humor, laughed aloud.

"What are you thinking of? You have not yet seen my dancers!"

Two slaves went from tripod to tripod, scattering a powder on the flickering faggots of sweet-scented wood. The flames sank, and a heavy fragrance pervaded the darkened hall.

The soft music of stringed instruments flattered the ear and lulled the weary senses. Then, out of the darkness, pale phantoms advanced with tripping steps; never plainly visible, shining through the dusk, they resolved themselves into the figures of six naked girls.

They came forward in a row, gazing before them with unseeing eyes; their faces were smiling masks. Five paces from the couches on which lay the king and his guest they halted, and with a single movement prostrated themselves, pressing their foreheads upon the mosaic of the floor. Then they sprang up again and began their dance.

Slowly at first, treading an intricate measure, they circled round one another, displaying their supple figures in complicated steps and pirouettes. Ever and again they came together, only to disperse, until finally the eye, losing track of all individual movements, perceived only the swaying and tossing of interpenetrating waves of motion.

Then, suddenly, the melody grew loud and passionate. More swiftly moved the dancers, gliding past one another with a smooth, serpentine movement; two by two they took hands, and whirled around with flashing speed. There was a faint rustle of pearls and diamonds; soft little cries fluttered on the air, firing the senses.

The servants went from tripod to tripod, sifting the fragrant powder on the flickering flames. The hall grew darker, and the sultry fragrance more intense.

Wilder and wilder grew the music, more and more ecstatic the movements of the dancers. Now there was an end of swaying and gliding; the dance quickened to a frantic whirling, more and more uncontrolled and lawless. Now all six dancers, holding hands, wheeled round with frantic speed; now they loosed their hold, and each spun upon her own axis. Veils and garlands tossed and flickered in the air like mysterious flames; the cries grew louder; and the reek of the fragrant powders was blended with the odor of heated bodies.

It seemed to Julius that he was dreaming; that he saw these things from a distance, and as through a veil. The music, the incense, the sight of the dancers had roused him from his accustomed calm and reserve; the very foundations of his soul were being dissolved. He fought with himself; he sought by an act of will to bring back what he had lost; but somehow the power to compel its return was failing him. His heart throbbed as though it would burst; he could no longer draw his breath freely; a delicious pain, a sort of numbness, was making him incapable of thought; imperceptibly his will was dissolving into nothingness. He saw the king's dark eyes fasten mysteriously upon his own; he tried to

speak but could not; he tried to rise, but he could not stir.

Now it had grown quite dark; only here and there a little blue or green flame flickered and sank. The whole hall was only a fragrance.

And then, suddenly, it began to rain roses. First they fell singly, like the great heavy drops that herald a thunderstorm; then more swiftly, until at last they came in a steady downpour that seemed as though it would never end. Soon the hall and the tables and the couches were a foot deep in roses; the rain of blossoms fell like a constantly changing curtain before the wild disorder of the dance, so that the glimmering bodies could hardly be distinguished.

Nearer came the dancers, encircling the reclining guests, gliding between the tables and the couches. For a moment Caesar saw a girl's bare bosom close before his eyes; then the lovely phantom vanished. But now it reappeared, on the other side; once more to vanish, and a third time it returned, whirling round the reclining guest in a contracting circle. Almost as though pleading for help the young man glanced at the king. And the king suddenly stretched forth his hand, gripped one of the girls, and drew her down to his couch. There was a faint cooing sound, as though from a dove aroused from sleep; and then the king and dancer disappeared in the purple dusk.

But again the naked dancing girl appeared. And this time she did not vanish, she came quite close, bending over Julius, with her arms outstretched behind her body, and her sultry Asiatic eyes seemed to pierce and sink into his own. Lower and lower she bent above him; a fragrant mouth hovered over his own, touched it, and fastened upon it in an endless kiss. Two hands stroked his forehead, his temples, his neck, his breast—and then a glowing body sank feverishly upon his own.

The last flickering flame was extinguished.

* * * * *

Cousin Cotta, at home, had a little figure of some unknown milky stone; a Jewish antiquary had forced him to buy it, asking a preposterous price. It was said to have come from Sericum. It represented a most singular creature, a fantastically dressed man in frantic movement, with distorted features and wicked, protuberant eyes. Cotta, who had a great sense of style, had set the figure on a pedestal covered with a magnificent piece of embroidered silk, which was likewise of Seric origin, and he prized it no less than a certain Indian image of a man seated upon an open lotus-flower, which he called a Buda.

Caesar could not help thinking of the wild man of Sericum while the Propraetor Marcus Minucius Thermus, his commandant, was reprimanding him. Marcus, who was growing old, and had spent half his life campaigning in all parts of the world, was almost spitting with rage, and infusing into his words all the gall of which he was capable. From time to time he paused to recover his breath, and then returned to the attack with redoubled fury.

"Did I entrust you with this mission," he shouted, "in order that you might wallow in a silken bed with Asiatic wenches? Is that the way to carry out an order? Here we are, up to our necks in mud, and the young gentleman lets himself be fed, like a harlot's lapdog, fatted on Persian geese and Egyptian titbits! Calmly ignores all orders to return! You would have been at that whoreson court to this day if Flavius hadn't gone to fetch you! It would have given me all the pleasure in the world to court-martial you!"

He gasped for breath, and slung the corner of his toga back across his shoulder. Then he continued:

"What evil spirit possessed you to volunteer for my expedition in particular? Are there not commanders enough who make war as you seem to think it should be waged? Who take good care that their lieutenants shall suffer no lack of wine and wenches? You don't get that sort of thing from me, young fellow! I take good care to make it clear to my young men that war is a cursedly serious business, in which

one gets nothing better than wounds and lice! That's a lesson you too will learn, my dear young sir! I didn't force you to come with me, but now you are here you shall learn what it means to serve under Marcus Thermus!"

Again he paused to recover breath. With an angry snort he continued:

"I'll have no skunks in my camp—do you understand?" The outburst seemed to have relieved him. More calmly, though even now savagely enough, he concluded (At last! thought Julius):

"Mytilene is ripe for storming. At five tomorrow morning we attack. You will report yourself at once to the tribune Maternus, as commander of the storming party. Either you show tomorrow that there's something in you, or you are broken! And in that case it'll be good riddance!—Dismiss!" —The last word he trumpeted like an excited war-elephant. Julius threw up his hand to the salute, and lost no time in escaping from the tent.

* * * * *

Whistling malevolently, the stone charges of the siege-catapults whirled through the air, falling with a crash on the city wall. The breaching-huts, like bloodthirsty leeches, had fastened themselves upon the stone flanks of Mytilene, and the battering-ram swung back and forth, in time with the rhythmical shouts of the rammers, shaking the masonry more viciously with every blow. Moving on rollers, of equal height with the battlements, the siege-tower staggered forward over the filled-up moat. It was hung from top to bottom with dripping hides, in order to protect it from blazing arrows and pitch-rings. Slingers and archers crouched behind its breastwork and maintained an incessant fire, while within the tower the legionaries waited for their time to come. The saps had nearly reached the dead angle; they were all crowded with storming-troops, awaiting the order to charge.

The besieged citizens were putting up a desperate defence. Behind every loophole and embrasure picked sharpshooters

watched their opportunity; let one of the besiegers expose a handbreadth of his person, and an arrow found its mark. Their principal target was the tower, which they assailed from either side; at the same time heavy masses of rock rattled down on the breaching-huts. One of them had already been put out of action; in the roof of a second yawned a tremendous hole, through which an uninterrupted rain of blazing brands, and bundles of straw and rags, and boiling water and oil, and molten lead poured down into the interior. At one point a long hooked pole was thrust out of a hut, fixing its fangs into the battlements and tearing at them. It was caught in a noose, and dragged up, amidst the deafening cheers of the defenders. Hanging to it were a couple of kicking legionaries; in a moment they were transfixed with arrows.

Caesar, leaping back into the sap from his brushwood-covered observation-post, looked about him. His men, lying on the floor of the trench, glanced at him indifferently. In the eyes of many he read open disdain; the spruce aspirant in the brand-new uniform did not impress these shabby, hard-bitten warriors. One of them thrust a hand into his leather jerkin, fumbling abstractedly, pulled something out, placed it, without removing his eyes from the young man's face, on the thumbnail of his left hand, and squashed it with the nail of his other thumb. The faces of his comrades wore a hardly suppressed grin.

"You might have cleaned yourself earlier," said Julius angrily.

"I had no opportunity," said the man, grinning. "My slaves took so long to perfume my bath, and then it was really too late."

A few of the men neighed with laughter. The young man felt that his authority was at stake. He was on the point of losing his temper; then he suddenly controlled himself. I must make an example of the man, he thought. But I must be absolutely calm, or all is lost.

Slowly he walked up to the man.

"Stand up," he said, in a dangerously quiet voice, "when you speak to your officer."

Reluctantly the man obeyed. But he was scarcely on his feet when a blow on the point of his chin knocked the helmet from his head and threw him against the wall of the trench.

"That," said Julius, as quietly as before, "will teach you how you have to behave to me." There was a deathly silence. The young man looked about him, and added, still very quietly, almost indifferently: "You can spit me from behind afterwards, like the cowards that you are, but you will not be insolent to my face."

There was still a deathly silence. Slowly Julius swept them with his gaze. Their eyes fell; the wolves were tamed.

An officer came panting along the trench.

"We are off!" he gasped, his voice breaking. "Your direction is the bastion there, half right." Breathlessly he panted on.

Caesar suddenly felt his heart thumping in his throat. There was a feeling of weight and constriction in the pit of his stomach. My first experience of the front, he thought. Damnation! I mustn't let any one notice. . . . Am I pale? The thought tormented him.

"Make ready!" he ordered, constraining himself to a steely composure. From the end of the sap to the wall was no great distance: barely fifty paces. But these fifty paces were covered amidst a hail of arrows and leaden missiles. Before the company had reached its objective almost one third of the men had fallen. Now the survivors flattened themselves against the wall, and recovered their breath.

Julius took his bearings. To the right and the left of him were other companies of storming-troops, all taking breath before the decisive shock. Wherever he looked he saw feverishly glittering eyes, lips firmly compressed or bitten by clenched teeth, features distorted in painfully repressed excitement.

A signal—a long, yelling cry.

"Charge!"

To Julius the next minute seemed a wild, feverish delirium. He found himself clambering up a human tower—three testudines, standing on one another's shields—and swung himself on to the top of the wall; and the next moment he was engaged in the fiercest hand-to-hand conflict. A face appeared before him, the eyes protruding with fury: he clove it with his sword. He saw a gap between the rings of a cuirass, and he plunged his sword into the gap, barely conscious of what he was doing. For the first time in his life he felt the mortal yielding of flesh beneath the blade in his hand—the slack weight of the stricken body, which dragged his arm downwards until it slipped off his sword. A sword flashed over him, hovered for a moment above his head, but did not, as he expected, descend with a vicious hiss, because the fingers that grasped the hilt opened in a sudden convulsion.

And then, all of a sudden, it was quiet within him and about him. Is that all? he thought. The enemy were giving way; they were falling back from the wall. Only four or five were left; and these were attacking one of his legionaries. Caesar recognized him clearly; it was the louse-catcher. Now the man had fallen to the ground; with failing strength he held his shield before him, and furious hands began to tear it from his grasp. With one leap Caesar was beside him; straddling over his body, he dashed the edge of his shield into the ribs of the nearest aggressor, so that the man shut up like a knife, with something between a groan and a shriek, and thrust his blade into the belly of a second assailant. Suddenly the point of a spear emerged from the throat of a third, and he disappeared as though swept out of existence.

And now only his comrades were there. He staggered towards them. Eyes glistened; hands crushed and shook his own. The fallen man raised himself painfully, stammering his thanks with bloody lips, his faithful, dog-like eyes fixed upon Julius. The tuba signalled from every side; there was a ringing shout of jubilation. Mytilene was taken.

In the Agora the troops were formed into a hollow square. In the middle of the square stood Marcus Minucius Thermus, and beside him was his adjutant, who was reading aloud certain names from a list in his hand.

"Aspirant Caius Julius!"

Julius stepped forward and stood before the commandant, who looked him over from head to foot. Then, reaching behind him:

"A civic wreath for saving the life of a comrade," he said, in his growling voice. In his hand was a wreath of oak-leaves. This he clumsily thrust over Julius' helmet.

"Well, you're the devil of a fellow!"

He said no more; but Caesar knew what such praise meant on Thermus' lips.

A FIRST MEETING

The afternoon was warm and sunny; the guests were gathered in the garden. They sat at ease on the stone benches, on chairs and stools which had been brought from the house, and even on the grass, enjoying the trivial, cheerful conversation which is one of the principal features of successful social functions.

Caesar, smiling, took in the gaily-colored picture at a glance. With a final touch of adjustment to the folds of his toga, he went up to the lady of the house.

This lady was in a state of great agitation, indefatigably running hither and thither, introducing her guests to one another, or pressing them to take refreshments—the surface of the great stone table was covered with innumerable delicacies—or exchanging a few amiable words with a guest or friend.

Now, having discovered Julius, she hastened towards him with outstretched hands.

"Caesar!" she cried, with exuberant cordiality. "I am so glad you have come after all! I was beginning to think you had forgotten."

He bowed, smiling, over the small, plump hand.

"The suspicion is unjust," he replied; "and in my case doubly so." He followed her as she led the way to the rest of the guests, and the chattering throng closed about him.

His activities in Asia—that is to say, his sojourn at the court of Nicomedes—had given him a prominent position in the aristocratic society of Rome. This was not the first time that people had thronged about him, overwhelming him with congratulations, and above all, asking him all sorts of questions; they seemed to have an insatiable appetite for particular details. He gave them what they asked willingly enough, simply for the sake of peace; mingling truth with falsehood, he stuffed the insatiable maw of curiosity with a medley of sensational details, telling a story which could not have been bettered by the most experienced weaver of romances.

At last the first and fiercest assault was over. The inquisitive guests dispersed, full-fed; returning, with heads filled with strange matters, to their own insignificant affairs. He had some little difficulty in shaking off the more persistent, but he managed, by beating an orderly retreat, to reach the stone table, where, for the moment, quiet prevailed.

But he had no lasting peace in his rôle of social lion. The endless congratulations on his diplomatic and military successes, and in particular the distinction awarded him at Mytilene, were as tiresome as the salacious inquiries of corrupt ladies of fashion as to his experiences at the court of the King of Bythinia, which appeared to have been the subject of malicious gossip.

But there was, after all, some one by the stone table. Caesar caught sight of him, too late to withdraw; now he had to take the outstretched hand:

"Hail, Caesar."

"Hail, Catilina."

Catilina's worn features still retained something of their old patrician delicacy; but this vanished as his lips twisted themselves into a smile that was intended to be amiable.

"It is a long time since we met, Caesar."

"It is a long time," repeated Caesar, rather blankly.

"Not since we met in the marshes, I think?" continued Catilina.

Caesar nodded, a slight furrow between his eyebrows. It was not particularly tactful of Sergius to remind him of his debt to him.

"You have made your peace with Sulla?"

"Yes—more or less." Caesar was gazing at a young woman who was a stranger to him. She was talking to Sempronia, the wife of Decimus Brutus. He had already been struck by the beauty of her eyes.

"And now you have been earning laurels in Asia?"

"Not laurels, only oak-leaves." They were great, questioning eyes; he could not see what lay in their depths; it was as though they were delicately veiled; and yet—or perhaps for that very reason—they had a peculiar charm for him.

Catilina followed his gaze. He laughed, a light, disconsolate laugh.

"Spare yourself the trouble, Caesar. She is reputed virtuous."

"I have no intention of testing her virtue," replied Julius, more coldly than he had intended.

"Of course," the other nodded, "you are hardly free. Is it a fact that your connection with Lollia still continues?"

Caesar's expression betrayed nothing of the disagreeable surprise which he felt at the question.

"What connection?" he replied, with quiet disdain. "It is news to me."

A searching glance, and again the mysterious tittering laugh.

"My dear friend!" said Sergius. "One sees that while you have been in Asia you have forgotten that Rome is a nest of gossip. For that matter, you will not find that your praiseworthy reticence is shared by any of your partners: for the moment you are in the fashion, and Lollia finds it piquant to have her name coupled with yours, just as Postumia used to do."

The furrow reappeared between Caesar's eyebrows. It was

obvious that he found it difficult to preserve his quiet and cheerful mask.

"You are talking nonsense," he said, with a touch of impatience. "Neither Sulpicius nor Gabinius is the man to suffer such relations."

"Quite provincialized!" said Catilina, with condescending compassion. "There is not a husband in Rome who troubles himself about his wife's infidelity. You will soon get over your surprise! Wait until you have been here a few weeks!"

Julius made no reply; his eyes, with sudden and eager interest, were following the master of the house, who had just made his appearance, passing from guest to guest with a word of welcome, his fat, anxious face, the typical face of a banker, stiffened into a conventional smile.

"The bear in the comedy," said Catilina, with biting scorn. "Without his money Crassus would never have got the fair Tertullia."

The great financier's massive figure came rolling towards them. Catilina's greeting he answered with his frozen smile; but as he turned to Caesar it seemed to be wiped off his features; the flabby face grew tense and rigid.

"Caesar," he said, without prelude, "I have read your proposal, and it interests me. Let us walk through the garden." Taking Caesar's arm, he drew him aside. Profoundly abstracted, and playing with the folds of Caesar's toga, he continued: "So you believe you could reform the state of affairs now existing in Rome?"

"No," replied Caesar, drily. "I do not believe the Roman problem can be solved in Rome at all."

Crassus gave him a sidelong glance of amazement.

"Where else?" he snorted.

The young man's hand described a semicircle.

"Anywhere between Spain and Asia. Anywhere but in Rome. As the Republic is today it has outlived the justification of its existence."

"Explain yourself more clearly."

"We have still the constitution which Rome gave itself

after the overthrow of the kings; one *polis,* a city state after the fashion of Athens, Sparta, Corinth. But about this city of Rome there has gathered, in the course of centuries, a whole complex of countries which are practically outside the pale of the law. So it comes that this gang at home here, which lives only by subornation, actually determines the fate of whole continents—highly civilized continents."

"That is so," growled Crassus. "But how would you alter it?"

"I want to help the Roman State out of the clothes which have grown too small for it, and give it more amply fitting garments."

"To leave metaphor for reality: you want to decentralize?"

"Decentralize." Caesar nodded agreement. "All that is not the city of Rome is today the object of Rome's exploitation. That is worse than immoral: it is uneconomic. If the subjugated world has an interest in Rome it will gladly be loyal to Rome, and will work for the general welfare in a very different spirit from that which it shows today, under the rods of extortionate governors and avaricious tax-farmers. But no man feels this interest unless he himself has a voice in the government of the State. This, then, is what I ask: the provinces must be permeated by the Roman spirit,—and must enjoy full autonomy within the framework of the commonwealth."

"I should like one of the Senators to hear you!" Crassus chuckled. "However, there is some truth in your idea. But have you considered the difficulties of putting it into practice?"

"I know," replied Caesar, with perfect composure, "that I shall have not only the Senate against me, but the whole populace, since I should be depriving it of the wages for which it does not work."

"And you are not afraid of the fate of the Gracchi?"

"Pompeius has shown us how one can deal with the Senate. Do you believe he would have got the command in the Spanish war, with all its tremendous possibilities, if he had

disbanded his army, in accordance with his orders, after the conquest of Lepidus?"

"You must go to Pompeius." Crassus caught at the idea. "We must get in touch with him. Today he is a power with which one has to reckon. It is true that he is an inflated, empty-headed fellow, as no one knows better than I. At the time of the servile rebellion . . ."

"But as a tactician he is quite exceptional," Caesar eagerly interrupted his companion. "The best leader of troops we possess. I have studied his march through Picenum—a masterly achievement!"

Crassus looked down on the young man with a benevolent smile.

"What a versatile fellow you are, my little Caesar!" he said, appreciatively. "Now you are even studying military history!"

Caesar could not suppress a laugh. "One never knows when it may become useful," he replied, with amusement.

Crassus grew serious again.

"In order to get an army together, one must have a campaign," he said, speaking half to himself. "But where is it to be fought? Lucullus is fighting in Pontus; so that is out of the question. And in Spain Pompeius has just wound up a campaign. Spain too is out of the question. And elsewhere, for the moment, all is quiet. Bah!" he said, interrupting himself, "it is easy enough to manage a war when one is needed!"

"The human material is more important," Caesar agreed. "But the degenerate Roman proletariat is of no use to me; it runs away at the first flight of arrows."

As they were returning to the other guests, the banker halted and gave Julius his hand.

"If you should ever be in Transpadana," he said thoughtfully, "I have useful connections there. Have a look at the people some time. A sound, energetic stock; no degeneration there. Have a look at the Transpadanians." He shook Caesar's hand, which he still held in his own, and turned back to his

other guests. Line by line, the frozen smile returned to his face.

The conversation with Catilina had damped Caesar's spirits; and his talk with Crassus had filled him with gloom. He looked about him, wondering where he could find gaiety and happiness. Sempronia was still sitting with the strange young woman, a little apart from the other guests, on a wide stone bench. Now, as Caesar strolled by, she called to him. He went up to her.

"Now you have your Caesar!" she cried to her companion, gaily. "Take good care that he doesn't run away from you!"

"Sempronia! Please!" The young woman blushed.

"Nonsense!" was the other's vigorous retort. "If the whole of Rome is interested in a man, there is no harm in your being so!—Caesar, this is Servilia, the wife of my cousin Marcus Brutus. She is criminally neglected by her husband. Try to atone for his error!"

"Sempronia!" Again the young woman blushed hotly.

She is delightful, thought Caesar. At last a natural, unperverted woman. In a moment his high spirits had returned. He leaned easily on the arm of the stone bench, saying:

"Do you know, Sempronia, of whom you remind me?"

"No! Of whom? Tell me!"

"Of an old Jew who offered me his services in Rhodes. 'What can you do?' I asked him. And he replied: 'I can give good advice!' "

Sempronia rose, in smiling indignation.

"To say such a thing to me!" she cried. "Fie, Caesar! I shall punish you by leaving you!"

The young man watched her as she went, and then took the place which she had vacated beside Servilia.

"You will permit me?"

She moved a little to one side. "Willingly," she nodded.

"You need not move away!" he said reproachfully.

She smiled gaily.

"Such a great personage must have ample room!"

"A great personage? If you knew how small I feel before a beautiful woman!"

Now she was suddenly serious. "Caesar," she said, "once for all: I will candidly confess that I should like to be your friend. My reason you shall learn later. But if we are to agree you must never—do you understand?—you must never offend me by empty flattery."

Now it was Caesar's turn to change color. He realized, almost with amazement, that he was blushing.

"Forgive me," he said, in some confusion. "You are right."

There was a moment's silence. The thread of their conversation was broken; neither of them could find a bridge. Julius was the first to speak:

"How comes it that I have never met you hitherto?"

"We go into society very little," she explained. "My brother-in-law was involved in the unsuccessful insurrection of Lepidus, and that, of course, placed us in a difficult position. It is only since his reconciliation with Pompeius that things have improved."

"Yes," murmured Caesar, thoughtfully. "Pompeius is on top." He raised his head and looked her full in the eyes: "So politics merely are to blame for the fact that I have never made your acquaintance before today?"

"I have known you a long time," she replied softly.

"You have known me? How?"

"Do you remember Lucius Servilius?"

"What a question! Of course! One of my best friends! After Mytilene, under his uncle Isauricus, we served together in Asia. Are you related to him?"

"He was my brother."

"Was? Why—what . . ."

"He was killed in Spain last year."

Once more they were silent. Then the young woman changed the subject:

"Do you like the life that you are leading here, Caesar?"

"What do you mean?" he asked, in some embarrassment.

She considered for a moment. Then, evading his question, she replied:

"My brother told me a great deal about you; of your opposition to Sulla, and your behavior in Asia, and your attacking the provincial exploiters. I often used to think that one of the old heroes of Livy had come to life again in you: you were so bold, so fearless, so loyal and sincere. You will not misunderstand me when I confess to you that I was as pleased as a child to come here today—simply because I knew that you would be here."

"I shall not misunderstand," said Julius, in a curiously hoarse voice. "But go on."

"You came—and instead of one of Livy's heroes I saw a dandy, with curled hair and polished finger-nails, and a toga of the latest cut, folded in the newest fashion; I heard people speaking of a spoiled darling of the women, who changes his mistress in obedience to the fashion; of a gambler and epicure, who makes it his chief business to throw his money out of the window, and thoughtlessly runs into debt. Forgive me —" and now she looked straight into his eyes—"for speaking so candidly. But—all this positively hurt me. I did not want to have to despise what I had honored." The last words were almost inaudible, but the large, questioning eyes still held his own. There was no veil before them now, and Caesar gazed into their unfathomable depths. He took a few moments to collect himself before he answered her. Then he began, and as he spoke many things became clear to him which until this moment had puzzled or evaded him:

"To another person I should perhaps reply that in spite of my youth I have already gone through a great deal, and that my pursuit of pleasure, and even my foppishness, is merely the natural reaction after the bad years I have lived through. But to you, Servilia, I will not say that. Although we have only just become acquainted, it seems to me as though we had been intimate friends for years. Perhaps it is because you are the sister of my friend Lucius. He used to preach at me just as you have done. No, Servilia"—and he raised his head

—"to you I will tell the truth as far as I myself know it: this pleasure-seeker's countenance is only a mask with which I conceal my true self. Have you forgotten how the founder of your house came by his name? Have you forgotten that Brutus means 'booby,' that Junius behaved like an imbecile in order to carry out his plans unobserved? Perhaps my foppishness has a similar purpose. Perhaps I have higher aims than any of the mayflies about me dream. Am I to cry them in the market-place, giving my adversaries the opportunity of nipping them in the bud? Action is a tree, which stands in the sunlight, visible to all men's eyes; but the roots must remain in the earth, in the sheltering darkness, for otherwise they will not have strength to nourish and develop the sapling. If none but you saw me, you would see another face than this mask of mine. One day, perhaps, I shall be able to lay it aside. But in the meantime you must understand why I play this absurd comedy. Wait, then, if you are disposed to be my friend. You have no reason to honor me; but at least do not despise me."

A light slowly dawned in the depths of the great eyes. A tender smile seemed to illuminate the delicate face from within. "I thank you, Caesar," said Servilia, simply.

Footsteps were approaching. Julius turned his head; Catalina went by. The wasted, aristocratic face, turned full against the cold light of the early evening, seemed doubly pale; and the lines about the lips gave him almost the look of a man in pain.

The young woman had risen to her feet. Her eyes were again veiled.

"It is growing late," she said, and her cheerful tone seemed a little forced; "and I must go home. Farewell, Caesar!"

Hesitating, she gave him her hand.

He held her fingers for a moment in his own.

"May I come to see you?" he asked.

A last, faint reflection of the former radiance of her eyes.

"Yes, come," she said warmly. "Come soon!—Till we meet again, Caesar!"

CHAINS

WHO was the man upon whom all eyes were centred? Who was the pampered darling of the people, no less than the hope of the Senate? Who was the fortunate being into whose lap all fruits were falling of their own accord—who was the spoiled favorite of fortune? Never, surely, since the walls of Rome were founded had the fates so favoured a mortal!

There was only one answer to all these questions: Pompeius! Pompeius, who was accustomed to reap where others had sown; Pompeius, whose ladder to fame was built by other hands; Pompeius, whom all, openly and privately, in the market-place as in the political clubs, declared to be the only man who was capable of ending the muddled campaign against Mithridates of Pontus.

In the garden of his house Julius was striding up and down the one long, straight gravel path. His hands were clasped behind his back; his eyes were gazing straight ahead, though they saw nothing. From the garden wall to the colonnade, from the colonnade to the garden wall, he paced to and fro. A storm was raging in his heart, and it was all that he could do to control himself, to avoid sinking into discouragement and impotent envy.

Fate had not made things so easy for him as for this upstart Pompeius. What he had achieved was the guerdon of a fierce struggle, snatched after many a bitter defeat. While Pompeius, without effort, grasped whatever took his fancy, he had to toil and sweat, expending energies which he might have employed in creative work, and what he won he had to guard on every side, lest some hostile attack should destroy it.

And after all, what had he really achieved? He was the leader of a faction, like many another, in a party which had to be forcibly held together lest it should fall asunder. And among the leaders, was he not the least? There was Crassus, the power of capital, broad and weighty, blocking the way; Gabinius, the sly people's tribune; Manilius, the diplomatist, the experienced man of affairs; Cicero, equally skilled as

advocate and politician, a man of changing complexion, who was secretly forging a connection with the senatorial party; what was he, Caesar, beside these men? Crassus meant well by him; he was the only one who approved of his aims, and he was helping him lavishly out of his private purse. But that was all; for the rest he was nothing more than a serviceable agitator. Where it was a matter of really leading the party they simply stepped over him.

What availed all the big words which they permitted him to use? Who took him seriously if in a funeral oration by the grave of a dead aunt he referred to his vocation as the heir to the old noble traditions and the ideas of Marius? After all, it was the custom to fill one's mouth with phrases on such occasions; everyone knew that, and smilingly disregarded the aspirations of a young man who was nothing, possessed nothing, and was doing nothing to make a name, apart from piling up a mountain of debt.

Then came his domestic misfortunes. Although his marriage had been merely a political match, his wife had grown really dear to him. He had become accustomed to regard himself as the child's protector, removing every stone that might bruise her delicate feet, and finding his reward in the mute gratitude which lit up her timid gaze. But now something had befallen Cornelia from which he was powerless to protect her; for months past a grievous sickness had prostrated the slender, childish body, consuming her poor, feeble vitality.

But the woman whom he loved and by whom he was loved was the wife of another man. . . .

Since the hour when they had come so close to one another in Crassus' garden he had often met her. Then they had thought only of friendship; loyal and honorable, without misgivings. But that had been quick to change; the red flame of passion had blazed up between them, had set them both on fire. They had not willed it so; it had happened against their will. All resistance was vain. Now they submitted to their fate; they endured it like condemned criminals. Every

hour they spent together was a sweet torment; every second they were parted was hell. They passed through the spring of their passion as though love were not a blessing but damnation, and the bonds that united them were heavy as the chains of a galley-slave.

His mother entered the garden. Her bearing was erect as ever, but fine lines in the clear-cut face that was turned toward his own betrayed the approach of age. She came up to him with her accustomed quiet and measured gait. Her grave, sagacious eyes sought his own. Then she asked:

"What are you thinking of, Caius?"

A gesture of impatience.

"That at my age Alexander had already conquered the world."

She grasped the hand which he was waving so impatiently and led him to the bench beneath the cypresses. There she sat down, and with a gentle but irresistible strength drew the angry man to her side, rested his head upon her shoulder, and with light, gentle fingers stroked his cheek. So they sat for some minutes; then, when she realized that the worst of his resentment was passing, when his slow, deep breathing told her that her son was calmer, she began, with her gentle, motherly smile:

"So my big son wants to conquer the world?"

"That is not so difficult as it looks!" he replied, defiantly.

She smiled her kind, mysterious smile.

"Then why do you make it so difficult for yourself?"

"I?" He tried to raise his head, but the caressing hand showed that she too was strong, and it held him inflexibly. He let it have its way, and answered explosively, in the same defiant tone:

"It is the others who are making it difficult for me; not I."

"Indeed!" Despite his resentment, he had to laugh at the surprising dryness of her tone.

"Yes," he said, "that sounds like a contradiction; but"—and his brow, which had hardly cleared, grew dark again—

"if one meets with so much opposition, if one has so little luck as I have—"

"My child!" She spoke very quietly, with the profound experience of maturity. "There is no good or bad luck; there are only strong wills and weak."

Once more he tried to spring up; once more the caressing hand held him fast.

"I am surely not lacking in strength of will," he grumbled. "Remember how quickly I returned from Asia after Sulla's death."

"And what did you gain by that?"

"Nothing: because I saw at once that Lepidus' enterprise was not to be taken seriously."

"So your effort was a beating of the air. In such efforts, my dear Caius, I see no strength of will. Energy need not manifest itself in incessant activity; true strength waits quietly and bides its time."

"Wait! I never do anything else!"

"No, Caius, that is not true; you are squandering yourself; you are wasting your energies, swimming against the stream, offering opposition where opposition is out of place, and then you wonder why your efforts result in nothing. Must I tell you the fundamental principle of purposeful action? Must I remind you, who are a man of nearly thirty, that there is no such thing as an absolute rule of action; there are only existing situations, of which one must have the best one can? That one should not oppose a hostile force; that if possible one should support it, in order to bring it as quickly as possible to the summit of its power—and to the exhaustion that follows? You used to understand this well enough; can it be that you have forgotten it now?"

She spoke on, in her quiet, musical voice, which fell upon her son's ears like a soothing melody. He listened to the voice without giving heed to the words; the bond between his mother and himself was too close to need the mediation of speech. Slowly his head drooped lower, until it rested on his mother's bosom, on the breasts that had given him his

first sustenance. He could hear her mother's heart beating, in a strong, quiet rhythm which nothing had power to perturb. Involuntarily his hand felt for his own pulse, and with profound satisfaction he found there the same quiet rhythm. The last waves of the tempest within him began to abate. A peace descended upon him, a silence in which he felt the stirring of power within his soul; he was conscious of a concentration, a confirmation of that power, before whose mighty ramparts all external opposition must fail.

Quietly he raised his head—and this time no hand restrained him—and looked into his mother's eyes. Neither spoke; but they understood one another in the profoundest depths of their being.

Now that the storm which had raged within him was calmed Caesar remembered his young wife.

"How are things going in there?" he said, cautiously.

"Better," replied his mother. "She is awake; she wanted to see you. But when she heard you were in the garden she said you were not to be disturbed."

"Poor child!" he said, painfully moved. "I will go to her." He stood up and went toward the house, his mother gazing after him with her grave, sagacious eyes.

The sick-room was half darkened. Someone had opened a window to give the sufferer fresh air, and as Caesar entered the yellow curtain bellied out in the draught like a sail.

Cornelia turned her head toward him, smiled, and feebly attempted to raise her hand. Caesar hastened to her side, took the fragile fingers, and lifted them to his lips.

"It is good of you to come," she whispered.

"Why, of course I came, Cornelia," he replied, sitting down on the edge of the bed. "I am so glad to hear that you are better."

"Yes, thanks. A little better."

He considered her, stroking her hand, which he still held in his own. Although the merest layman in medical matters, he knew that he was looking at the Hippocratic face: the feverishly glittering eyes, deeply sunk in their orbits, the

fallen cheeks, with the skin drawn tight across the cheek-bones, the thin, colourless lips, which bared the teeth at every word, spoke all too plain a language. Through the face he could see the death's-head, the whole structure of the delicately-modelled skull.

"I have altered a great deal, haven't I?" said the sick girl, quietly, conscious of his gaze.

He smiled consolingly, and not a line of his face betrayed the knowledge which he had just acquired.

"Oh, no," he answered. "Of course, you have grown thin and lost weight. When you are well again we shall have to stuff you properly."

"When I am well again," she repeated, doubtingly, and yet full of a sudden hope. Then her mind wandered to other things. "Is it fine outside?" she asked.

"Beautiful," he assured her. "Warm and sunny. All the birds are singing. Don't you hear them?"

She listened; then she said, with a little sigh:

"I should like just once to go into our garden again."

He nodded. "You shall, child, as soon as you are stronger."

She made no reply; she lay motionless, gazing at the ceiling. He looked at her in silence, and a thousand thoughts passed through his mind. That he would never walk with her again upon the shore at Baiae; that the little Julia would soon be motherless—but the child would not understand; and that he would have to speak beside her bier—just because she was the daughter of the defiant Cinna, the friend of Marius; and that they would all stand round him with solemn, conventional faces that ill concealed their boredom: Crassus, Manilius, Gabinius, Cicero, Catullus, Catilina, his Cotta cousins—perhaps even Pompeius . . .

The name still lingered in his mind as a maid entered, a glass of lemonade in her hand. And pursuing his thoughts, he said aloud:

"If a messenger comes from Pompeius, tell me."

"Yes, lord!" nodded the slave, timidly, and disappeared.

The sick girl turned her head towards him.

"You are expecting news of Pompeius?"

"Yes," he nodded. "I have something to discuss with him."

"What?"

"Politics," he said, evasively.

"What?" she repeated. "Tell me!"

He understood that her unoccupied mind was always thirsting after news of whatever kind. Ruefully he reproached himself for not having realized this earlier, for not having taken more thought for her. But it was so difficult, and especially now, when he was toiling to build the scaffolding that was to help him to realize his plans. And he suddenly became conscious of the egoism that was at the root of his behavior, the immemorial, unchanging egoism of every healthy person, who turns away from sickness in order to go his own way.

"Won't you tell me?" insisted the sick girl, plaintively.

He bent over her.

"Of course, child. I was only afraid it would not interest you." She made a slight movement of impatience. Hastily he continued: "We have had setbacks in Asia, and Lucullus will have to be recalled. Pompeius is burning to get the command; I ought to help him to get it."

"War!" The sick girl turned her head restlessly to and fro. "Always war! All my life, ever since I can remember, there has been fighting, killing, bloodshed. My first recollection is of murder: the killing of Drusus. Then came the war of the Confederates. Then the battles of Marius and Sulla. Then my father fell. I can still see him before me, as they brought him home from the Campus Martius covered with gaping wounds. Then came the proscriptions, and your flight. Then Lepidus. Then Sertorius in Spain. Then the slaves' insurrection. Now the war in Asia. All my life I have heard of nothing but war! War!" She had spoken with increasing excitement. Now she sat half upright on her bed, and cried with a voice which no one would have thought her ravaged body could have produced: "Tell me, do you never want to make peace? Are the bloody laurels so precious to you? Don't you know, you men,

what war means? When you ride in your triumphs, do you see only the pomp and splendor, and never the misery that you have caused, the tears that are shed because of you? War! What does war matter to me? What does it matter to me if the Roman boundary-stones are moved on a few miles? Life is the only thing that has any value! Life! Life!" Whimpering, she sank back on her pillows.

Caesar had been startled by her outburst. At first he tried to calm her, but as his attempt was unsuccessful he waited for the storm to wear itself out. Now he sat down again, quite close to her, took her in his arms, stroked her long, dishevelled hair, and petted her as though she had been a child, speaking to her in a quiet and tender tone.

Her excitement resolved itself into tears, which flowed silently and incessantly, as though her eyes had been two inexhaustible springs.

"You too will perish in all this blood," she complained. "Not today, not tomorrow, but some time the day will come when all this blood will turn against you and swallow you. Blood is a thing you cannot jest with. Whenever it is spilt, sooner or later it follows the slayer. So it has been since the beginning of time, and so it will always be. Those who have sacrificed others will themselves be sacrificed in the end." She fell silent, and again lay motionless, staring at the ceiling. Only the incessant flow of her tears bore witness to her profound emotion.

Her husband looked down on her in silence. What could he say to her? Explain why he could not do otherwise? Tell her that in this world nothing great can be achieved without conflict, whether bloody or bloodless, and that the bloodless battle is far more terrible, far more pitiless than that fought with naked steel? But of what avail were reasons? Her senses were in rebellion, shrinking with horror from that in which he perceived an iron necessity. He had no consolation to offer her; he must leave her to herself.

In silence they confronted one another, so near and yet so mutually remote. Against his will Caesar thought of the

woman who understood him better than this poor dying child; the woman who would perhaps tremble for him when he went into battle, but who would assuredly make no attempt to hold him back; if he had not been what he was she would not have loved him.

Once more the little slave entered. With timid, bashful steps she approached her lord, and whispered:

"The messenger, lord."

"From Pompeius?"

She nodded.

Caesar stood up, bowed over the sick girl, and kissed her hot forehead. She turned her head away; on her face was a rigid, alienated expression.

In silence Julius left the room. Once more the window-curtain bellied out in the draught, and for a moment a wave of sunlight and of blossom-scented air flowed into the twilit room. Between the curtain and the edge of the window the young man caught sight of a chaffinch; it was perched on a bough of the great chestnut tree, singing its jubiliant song in praise of life. . .

POMPEIUS

"WHAT have you brought me?" asked Pompeius, after greetings had been exchanged, and when they were both seated.

"If you are willing—peace," answered Caesar.

As always when he was surprised, the General stared before him for a second or two with unwinking eyes. Then he continued his question:

"Peace with whom?"

"With Crassus—that means, with the popular party."

Pompeius slowly shook his head.

"I am not at war with you."

"In that case"—Caesar drew his toga together and made as though to rise—"forgive me for disturbing you."

Pompeius looked at him uncomprehendingly.

"Where are you going now?"

"To tell Crassus that you think it useless to negotiate."

A helpless expression came into Pompeius' eyes.

"When did I say that? When was there any talk of negotiations?"

"You have just plainly refused them," asserted Julius.

"I? I said nothing of the kind. I merely said that I am not at war with you."

"Imperator—" the sonorous title was the wafer in which the pill was wrapped—"we are not now in the market-place; we need not play hide-and-seek with diplomatic phrases. You still have at hand the troops with which you fought in Spain; just as Crassus still has available the troops which he raised during the slaves' rebellion. And when two fully-armed men are in opposition they will finally end by attacking one another."

"You are talking as though—" said Pompeius, hesitating.

"I am talking in the only fashion that is proper if we are to speak plainly to one another," said Caesar, emphatically. "Otherwise we should merely be wasting our time."

"Wait a minute; sit down," said Pompeius, abstractedly.

Julius obeyed, watching the General with his steady, pitiless eyes. Pompeius, who was evidently finding it difficult to collect his thoughts, picked up the objects on his table and set them down again, avoiding his visitor's gaze.

Caesar reflected. Without a doubt, Pompeius was secretly quite ready to negotiate, but he had certain inhibitions to overcome, and for the moment he was irresolute. He must be helped to make up his mind. But how?

"Pompeius," he said, finally, "I will put Crassus' proposals before you. Listen to me quietly, and then tell me what you think of them. I think that will be the quickest way of arriving at a decision."

"Speak!" the other commanded.

"As I see the position," began Caesar, "it is, for the moment, as follows: the two strongest men in Rome: you and Crassus—" Pompeius flushed with pleasure at this recognition of his power—"have both collected a considerable body

of troops, and you regard one another with the profoundest distrust—whether justified or not does not matter. Such a strained situation might have consequences which either party would find regrettable. Such a situation is of no profit to either of you, but only to the Curia, which is delighted to see the only men who might be dangerous to it facing one another in order of battle."

"Hm!" Pompeius crossed his legs, and folded his arms, clasping his body as though seeking to withdraw into himself. This clear and precise exposition seemed to arouse his keenest interest.

Caesar waited a moment, in case the General had any observations to make. Since Pompeius was silent, he continued:

"The fact is that we seem destined to work together: you are a general without a party, and we are a party without generals. We need one another for our mutual defence. As long as we are divided the Curia can strangle us: you, by refusing to renew your plenary powers—for no military dictatorship can maintain itself permanently—and us, by setting at our throats a mob of senators who will make an end, once and for all, of a party of whose power they are jealous. United, on the other hand, we are invincible: you would have your supporters in the Capitol, a party which would contrive to give your every wish the force of law—if need be over the heads of the Senate—and we should have an army of ready and experienced soldiers under the foremost general of the empire—" and again Pompeius blushed—"which in case of need would give weight to our decisions. So that what Crassus proposes to you, through me, is a plain unequivocal pact."

Pompeius gazed before him. Then he said slowly:

"What are Crassus' conditions?"

He is won! thought Caesar, secretly rejoicing. He continued, in a matter-of-fact tone:

"This is what Crassus proposes: You both simultaneously disband your troops; you will enter into a loose alliance with

us; as our independent ally, so to speak; and for this we guarantee you the next great command and any special conditions you may name."

A heavy silence followed this lapidary statement of an active programme. Then Pompeius objected—and there was still a slight hesitation in his tone:

"Those are general promises. It would be necessary to state them more precisely."

Caesar replied, with a courteous wave of his hand:

"It is for you to state your demands."

Pompeius was fully conscious of the gravity of the moment. His forehead was deeply furrowed by the effort of concentrated thought; his words came from him one by one, the significance of each carefully weighed and measured:

"One condition to begin with," he said, "seems to me unacceptable: that I should disband my troops as Crassus disbands his. I cannot agree to that. I know what would happen. I should begin to disarm at the same time as the enemy: there would be a hitch of an incidental nature; and suddenly I should stand defenceless against an adversary armed to the teeth."

Caesar bit his lips to suppress a smile. Pompeius, who had so expressly denied that he was hostile to Crassus, had twice alluded to him as his enemy. In the same dry, almost business-like tone he replied:

"We need not quarrel about that, Pompeius. I will undertake that Crassus shall be the first to disband his troops. You need not begin until we have finished."

Pompeius gazed with astonishment at the young man who made such a sweeping proposal so casually.

"That of course is worth considering," he said, hesitating as ever. "But there is still the matter of the command."

Caesar smiled—for the first time during the negotiations.

"The war with Mithridates is waiting for you," he said simply. But again Pompeius slowly shook his head.

"The war with Mithridates won't run away from me," he replied. "Lucullus has bungled it too badly. That is a com-

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mand which I shall get sooner or later in any case." (He is right there, thought Julius). "It is of something else that I am thinking."

"And that is?" Now it was time for Caesar to disentangle the other's thoughts.

"One of the most deplorable burdens under which our import and export trade has to suffer," said Pompeius, "is piracy. It is a scandal; it is terribly prevalent, and has paralyzed whole provinces. You yourself have had personal experience of these gentry, Caesar, and not everyone is as fortunate as you were. Before anything else is done this pest must be eradicated. And I think—" here he drew a deep breath, and then concluded resolutely—"I think I should be the man to do it." He looked anxiously at Caesar, in order to read in his visitor's features the effect of his words.

But Caesar's expression was impenetrable. Drily he asked: "Your conditions?"

Pompeius' quick reply showed that he had a thorough grasp of the problem; that he had long ago considered it from every point of view.

"A three years' command with proconsular power over all the seas and the coasts for fifty miles inland; five hundred warships, a hundred and twenty thousand men, and five thousand cavalry; and free disposal over the treasuries of all states, provinces and client-states."

That is the end of the Republic, thought Caesar. That is the Pompeian monarchy, and an end of my plans. If he gets that I may as well retire for the rest of my life to my seat in the Sacred College. He sought desperately for a way out, and could find none. At the best, he thought, this would mean, for me, a life and death struggle with him, a struggle in which he would have all the advantages and I none. Oh, for only the smallest expedition on which I could gather troops and train them!

"You do not answer me?" Pompeius' voice sounded in his ears.

The question restored Caesar's composure. His mother's

words recurred to him. That very afternoon she had told him: "One should not oppose a hostile force; if possible one should support it, in order to bring it as quickly as possible to the summit of its power—and to the exhaustion that follows." Cautiously he answered:

"The range of your conditions forces me to consider the matter. This goes beyond my authority. I must sound Crassus. Is this your last word?"

"My last. I do not abate these conditions."

After all—why should one not consent? Three years is a long time; such a period would offer a thousand possibilities; three years away from Rome divorced a man from all the supports which he possessed; on his return he might find himself confronted by a totally new situation, to which he would have to adapt himself; three years, after all, was time enough to train and prepare an army, though not to attach it unconditionally to the person of the commander, as Sulla's troops, for example, were attached to him. All this must be represented to Crassus, if he should make difficulties.

Pompeius was growing impatient. Caesar's long silences made him uneasy. He tapped his toes on the floor, drummed with his fingers on the arms of his chair.

At last Julius spoke again:

"Of course, I cannot make any binding promise, but even these conditions do not seem to me to offer any insuperable obstacle." A deep sigh of relief, which Pompeius was unable to suppress, impelled him to observe still greater caution. "I will speak to Crassus, and will then advise you."

"Before long, I hope," said Pompeius. "Otherwise I must look for other allies."

"Where?" inquired Caesar, ingenuously.

"If necessary—in the Senate."

Caesar smiled coldly.

"I should advise you not to do that in any case. You would only become the slave of a stupid and conceited monster."

Pompeius looked away angrily: Caesar's words had hit the mark. Somewhat hastily he exclaimed:

"I hope it will not be necessary."

"At all events I will do my utmost," said Caesar, cautiously. He made as though to rise, but a further question from Pompeius checked him.

"If it should come to an agreement between us—" (So he is already counting on it, thought Caesar)—"how do you imagine it will be given practical effect?"

"That is very simple," Julius replied. "First of all the proposal will be laid before the Senate. They will naturally scent a trap, and flatly refuse their consent."

"But that will be the end of the matter," said Pompeius, anxiously.

Again Caesar smiled.

"Oh, no! That will be part of our plan. It will even help us to make the idea thoroughly popular. Then we shall deliver our assault."

"Do you imagine you can frighten the Senate in that way? Just reflect—"

"I think we can withdraw the proposal from the competence of the Senate, and take it direct to the popular assembly." A sudden light came and went in the grey eyes.

Pompeius glanced at him. He realized the magnitude of the venture, and he shrank from it.

"Are you then so sure that the popular assembly will accept it?"

Caesar laughed shortly.

"A proposal which attacks the Senate is as good as accepted beforehand!"

Pompeius breathed heavily.

"I wish I could share your optimism," he murmured.

"An optimism which is founded on experience," Caesar asserted. "No bribery will overcome the people's hatred of the Senate—and Crassus' money will do the rest." He stood up. "Is there anything else you wish to say?" "Nothing more.

I think we have said it all." And Pompeius too rose to his feet.

"Farewell then, Caesar."

"I will see you out, of course."

As they passed through the hall Pompeius seemed to be pondering something. At the door he spoke out:

"How would it be—would you not like to come with me if matters go so far? I know you have experience of war. You could have a post in my army—perhaps with the rank of proprætor."

By this Caesar knew that the other, even though he could not see through him, had some suspicion of his intentions, and wanted to make sure of him betimes. Hastily he declined the offer:

"At present my presence in Rome is indispensable; who else could repair the flaws that always occur in such schemes? Perhaps we can work together later at some time."

AN END AND A BEGINNING

She had not heard him enter. Now suddenly he stood in the doorway, looking thinner and slighter than ever in his black toga, with eyes in which a dull fire was smouldering.

She rose from the couch, thrusting aside the many cushions on which she had been resting, and went up to him, holding out her hand, which he kissed in silence.

Without a word she returned to the couch, and sank back on the cushions. He followed her and stood beside a chair, resting his hand on the back. In obedience to her silent gesture he sat down, leaning back like a man who is very weary. She gazed at him with her great unfathomable eyes.

"Is it over?" she asked at last, almost under her breath.

"Over," he echoed, gazing before him, his hands folded in his lap.

"Were there many there?" she asked discreetly.

"A great number." A little life came into the unwinking eyes. "The market-place was black with people."

"Did you deliver the funeral oration?"

"Yes. . ." He relapsed into his former rigidity.

"Death was a release for the poor thing," she said after a pause.

He nodded, mechanically at first, and then, as he became conscious of what she had said, with emphasis.

"Yes," he said. "In every respect. She was not fitted for this world." His eyes were dull and sorrowful as he turned them to his companion. "She did not have much happiness in her life."

And that little she did not know how to hold, was the woman's thought; but she did not utter it.

"Even as a child she had to go through so much," he continued; "It had robbed her of all vitality. She knew that herself, and she was quite resigned to her departure. 'Now at least I shall be able to sleep quietly,' she said only recently. It is pitiful to think of the poor child, Vilia. I am so sorry for her."

"And I too," she whispered.

Without noting her words, he continued his train of thought:

"For a long while" he said, "there has been no true intimacy between us. When we married we were almost children—I was sixteen, and she fourteen—and our honeymoon, if in our case one can speak of such a thing, was very brief. Then our ways parted. She had no notion whatever of what I was striving for. She gazed after me full of anxiety whenever I left home, and at the bottom of her heart she expected one day to see me brought home dead, as they brought her father." He was silent for a moment. "But in spite of all," he resumed, "there was a corner of my heart that belonged to her alone. When I was a boy I once caught a blackbird in our garden. It was frightened to death; it opened its yellow bill and gazed at me with flickering eyes. I always thought of that young blackbird when I looked at Cornelia. She was just as helpless, just as pitiful." Again there was sadness in his face.

She was watching him incessantly. Silence! she whispered to herself. He wants to talk. Silence!

"It was unfortunate for her," he said, "that she met and married me of all people. The best husband for her would have been a country gentleman, a landowner from Campania or Tuscia. In peaceful surroundings, far removed from the excitement of the Capital, the wounds that she suffered in childhood might perhaps have healed; here they could never heal, for they were always being torn open. And I was powerless to help her; above all, I could not give her the care that she needed. I had, after all, my work, my aims in life, which I could not neglect. During these last few days I have often reproached myself on this account. And yet even now I could not behave otherwise. Is that very wrong of me?"

"No, Caius," she said, quietly and firmly.

The simple, direct assurance seemed to comfort him. He looked at her gratefully.

"Yes," he said. "If only I had had you for a wife! You understand me; you take an interest in all that I do; you encourage me when I lose heart, you give me rest when I am tired. Cornelia was a chain that was always drawing me back; you would have been the wings which would have carried me above all others."

"Cornelia gave of her best," she said, quietly and steadily as before. "It was not her fault that it was not more."

Once more he raised his eyes to her. The lassitude had disappeared from them; they had recovered something of their usual brilliance.

"You too are good," he said, sincerely. "Not out of weakness, but out of strength." A tender light shone in his eyes.

She breathed more quickly. "Don't look at me like that," she begged, drooping her head.

He did not answer. Slowly he stood up, went over to her, and raised her face to his. Her eyes were brimming with tears.

"You are crying," he said, startled. "Why are you crying?"

She shook her head, silently pushing him away. Then, quite

suddenly, with an uncontrollable impulse, she flung her arms about him, pressing her tear-wet face to his shoulder.

A few passionate syllables. And then, bending over her, he distinguished the words, sobbed out between shame and happiness, which sent all the blood in his body to his heart.

"A child. . . a child. . . your child. . ."

"Vilia!" A dizziness overcame him; the room reeled before his eyes. For a moment or two he struggled to recover himself; then he fell to his knees before her, flung his arms about her hips, and buried his head in her lap, his body shaken with convulsive sobs.

She bent over him, laying her cheek against his. Her tears mingled with his own; it was long before they had recovered their composure.

He was the first to recover his self-control; and now he overwhelmed her with questions. How long had she known? Was she suffering much? Why had she not told him before? And was she absolutely, absolutely sure? The strong, reticent man was as transformed; he was like a child who is never weary of questioning.

In a voice that was still unsteady, she replied: she had suspected it for some time; but she would not tell him of her suspicions, because he was so troubled about his wife; she was afraid of destroying his peace of mind. No, she was not suffering: why should he think so? When she had always longed so for a child!—And yes, it was really and truly so; since that morning she had known it for certain. She had not meant to tell him yet, but when he looked at her like that. . . . The words came from her confusedly, as the thoughts entered her mind.

Now he had risen again, and stood before her, with perplexed gaze, that wandered aimlessly about the room. He bit his lips, breathing heavily, and clenching his hands. What had become of his superior composure?

Then he looked down again. His eyes fell on the black toga, that hung about him in long, heavy folds. And suddenly he was calm. When he spoke again his voice was so

changed that the woman was startled out of her bewildered happiness, and listened attentively.

"How strange," he said, "that you should have told me that today, of all days, just as I have buried Cornelia. Is it not"—and now he spoke so softly that she guessed rather than heard his words—"is it not as though the dying woman had lingered so long in order that she might give her soul to our child?" He shivered slightly, and his cheeks grew paler. He sat down beside Servilia, and continued even more softly, almost inaudibly, in a toneless voice, as though some alien spirit were speaking with his lips: "I must tell you something. It was on the last evening. I was sitting by her bed, as usual, and watching her. We did not speak; a few days earlier we had had a misunderstanding, because I had left her bedside on account of a summons to an important parley. Since then she had been taciturn and reserved. Suddenly she opened her eyes wide, looked hard at me, and cried: 'I am coming back again! I am coming back again!' Twice she said it, and then she relapsed into silence, and could not be persuaded to say what she meant. In the night she died."

The two sat silently side by side. Something unnameable that oppressed them by its might, seemed to have entered the room. After a long pause the woman was the first to speak, and the same awe that had breathed in his voice was now trembling in her words:

"Now I too must tell you something. Since I have suspected that I was going to have a child I have reproached myself bitterly. You know well enough that so long as you are with me all is well; but when I am alone all sorts of cruel thoughts assail me: that we have both sinned grievously, that our love is against all divine and human law, that I am an adulteress. And when I thought of the child I suffered doubly. This morning, as I was lying in bed, and first became absolutely certain, and was once more reproaching myself cruelly—just then I heard two of our house-slaves talking together outside. At first I did not understand what they were saying, because they were too far off, and were speaking

under their breath; but then they came nearer, and I heard one of them say plainly: 'Fate itself has willed it!' Quite loudly and distinctly. Then they spoke quietly again, and I heard no more." She looked at him with wide, questioning eyes. "Caius—will you think me very foolish, very superstitious, if I confess to you that at that moment I thought I heard a judgment given?" The last words were almost choked by her ill-suppressed emotion.

He shook his head. "No," he said. "Fate itself has willed it. You will give me a son who will be worthy of our love."

The first timid smile ventured to brave the awe of the moment.

"And if it is a girl?" she objected, shyly.

"It will be a boy," he said firmly, as though he could command the future. "A son, who will complete my life."

A FREE PEOPLE ON FREE SOIL

THE plain lay outspread before the eyes of the horseman in all its fruitful beauty, radiant with sunlight, and swept by a slight, refreshing breeze. As far as the eye could see were fields awaiting the sickle, and among them, here and there, were the white or yellow walls of farm-houses and villages. Beech-trees extended their shade-giving boughs as though in benediction; the avenue of mulberry-trees through which the rider was passing was like a cool green corridor, skirted by a brook that murmured interminably to itself. The air was full of the jubiliant notes of birds and the faint, busy humming of the bees which hung in their hundreds on the flowers. The whole picture was redolent of peace, calm, repose.

The young man, as he rode through Transpadana, absorbed the primitive strength and purity of the land with all his senses. He had kept only two of his servants with him; they followed him, since he was on horseback, leading a pack-horse by the bridle; his usual companion had been sent ahead with instructions to await him in Mediolanum. Thus he was

free and unencumbered as he had not been for many a day, and he was enjoying his leisure with all his heart.

A peasant or bondman met him on the highway, shuffling along beside his two-wheeled ox-wagon and trolling a song. The horseman accosted him.

"Do you speak Latin?"

The man had stopped at the sight of the noble rider, and broken off his song. Now he bared his magnificent teeth, which shone doubly white in his ruddy brown face, and eagerly affirmed:

"Me Latin, lord! Me very good Latin!"

The "very good" Latin was such a harsh, comical stammer that the rider could not help laughing. This excited the peasant to an outburst of merriment; he shook himself, slapped his bare, brown thighs, and bent almost double. Finally, even the two lackeys lost their reserved and dignified composure; they joined in, and the laughing quartet rang so loudly over the fields that bees and birds were silent as though to listen. At last, when the four had recovered a little, the rider continued his questioning:

"Do you know Caburus?"

The peasant reflected, his finger to his nose, and shook his head, confessing frankly:

"No, lord, I know no Romans."

"But Caburus is not a Roman," explained the other, urgently. "Caburus is of this country, a Transpadanian."

"Ho!" The peasant grinned again delightedly. "No Roman? Why you not say so first time? Of course I know him! What name?"

"Caburus, man! Caius Valerius Caburus!"

"Caburus!" chortled the peasant. "Caburus! Oh, a very fine man! A very—very—" he sought for a complimentary adjective, but as no other occurred to him he repeated himself. "A very fine man!"

"Well, do you know where his estate is?"

This, like the other questions, amused the peasant immoderately. He hopped from foot to foot, guffawing loudly, and

scratching the tip of his nose and the lobe of his ear. At last, as the rider began to show signs of impatience, he brought out the words:

"You ask me where his estate is? Ho! Ho! Very good! You ride straight on! You see white house there?" He pointed to a group of houses some fifteen minutes' ride distant. "There, Caburus, there!" He blinked and nodded, and as the other rode off, with a friendly word of thanks, he stood gazing after him.

The highway was shady and free from dust; the birds and insects had resumed their interrupted song; the horses, seeming to realize the nearness of the stable, trotted more vigorously, so that the last quarter of an hour was the pleasantest part of the ride. White walls appeared, a lane led off from the highway, the horseman followed it, rode into an open court-yard, and reined in his steed.

A dog sprang barking out of its kennel, tugging at its rattling chain. A great white cat leapt from the well-curb on which it had been sunning itself. Hens, in senseless excitement, went rushing in all directions, two ducks rose indignantly to their feet, and a few geese began to hiss and flap their wings. Under the low doorway of the house an old woman became visible.

Shading her eyes with her hand, she examined the stranger; then, on approaching him, courteously asked him his business, in perfectly good though rather harsh Latin. He wished, he replied, to speak to the master of the house. The master, she said, was in the fields. Perhaps the strange lord could wait until he returned?—Yes, he could wait; and he lightly dismounted. His servants followed his example.

In response to the old woman's call, a young girl appeared, with whom she exchanged a few half inaudible words; then, turning again to the stranger, she invited him to follow her indoors. Her daughter would take his servants to the stable, and there they could put up the horses.

As she proceeded him, the guest noted with surprise the dignified carriage of the woman, and the free, unconstrained

nobility of her whole bearing. He thought of the wives of the small farmers of the far south, ageing prematurely under the burden of labor; women with careworn faces and bowed backs, insolent, avaricious and deceitful. This woman reminded him of one of those legendary mothers of the great races of the past, as she offered her guest a seat by the hearth —her hearth; so friendly and cordial was her manner, and so full of indescribable dignity.

For a while they were both silent. The man, from time to time, drank a mouthful of the light, watered wine of the country, which the woman had set before him in an earthenware beaker, to wash down the coarse, nourishing farmhouse bread and the creamy cheese. The woman sat on a stool, and picked up the distaff which she had apparently laid aside on his arrival.

It was she who presently broke the silence. Her womanly curiosity got the better of the dignified reserve which she had so far exhibited. Had he come from far? she asked. From Spain, he replied. Where was Spain? she had never heard of it. Many hundreds of miles to the west, he told her; on the edge of the world, where the ocean washes the shores of Europe. She shook her head in astonishment; then she asked what he had been doing there, if the question was not intrusive. Of course it was not, he assured her, pleasantly; he had been there in the service of the State; as quæstor, if she knew what that was. To be sure, she replied; he was the man who collected the taxes. And she asked, a little anxiously, whether he had been sent to these parts in the same capacity? No, he reassured her, laughing, his year of office was completed, and he was returning to Rome. She added that she would have been surprised if he had come thither on such an errand, for they had always paid their taxes and tribute punctually, and could never have given cause for complaint. Did they get on well with their quæstor, he asked? Very well indeed; he was a sensible man, who did not ask the farmer to shoulder a burden greater than he could bear. As far as that went, conditions had been better since they had enjoyed the

rights of Latin citizens. As the gentleman would know, that was the reward for their attitude in the war of 64. Her husband had fought in that war, she added proudly. The Latin citizenship was an excellent thing, he interjected, casually, but the full rights of the Roman citizen were better. He might well say so, she agreed, with an earnest glance; and the whole country was waiting and longing for them.

Crassus did not exaggerate, he thought. The full civic rights must really be a vital matter to the country. He was on the point of enlarging on the subject when a shadow darkened the door. He looked up.

A man entered, broad-shouldered and grey-haired, clad in the coarse and simple linen smock of the farmer. The brown, muscular arms hung laxly, as do the arms of a manual worker after the day's labor is ended. His eyes, clear and steady as those of the stranger, rested on the visitor in quiet scrutiny as he approached with a courteous greeting.

"They told me in the yard that a strange Roman lord had come and wished to speak to me. How can I be of service to you?"

In his words, and in his whole bearing, was the same free, unconstrained dignity as his guest had observed in the woman; a pleasant, open friendliness, without a trace of servility or false humility.

In the same tone the stranger responded to the courteous greeting. "First of all, by giving me shelter for the night," he replied, "if I shall not be putting you to too much inconvenience."

The master of the house glanced quickly at his wife. "That has already been seen to," she replied to his silent question. The calm, steady eyes turned again to the guest.

"My house is yours."

When they were once more seated by the hearth—for the master of the house had pushed a chair to the fire, and was speaking of household matters to his wife—the stranger covertly looked about him, considering both his hosts and the room in which they were sitting. More and more he began

to feel that he had wandered into a bygone century, into an age when men were simpler and had fewer needs—and were greater. In such a room might Cincinnatus have reposed after his labors in the fields, resting his gaze on the unadorned whiteness of the walls, broken only by the high-lights of brightly-scoured utensils, and waiting for his unseasoned but nourishing meal. Thus had lived the men whose same vigor had made the Republic great and powerful; such were the men and women who had changed the wild forests of Italy into a smiling flower-garden; whose loins and wombs had engendered a race as simple and vigorous as their begetters. It was the great city that had been their misfortune, with its over-refinement, its superfluous necessities, in which all originality and magnanimity and energy had been lost.

The master of the house asked no further questions as to the purpose and intention of the stranger's visit. A few courteous inquiries as to his circumstances and his wishes; that was all. Every word was pregnant with reserve and dignity, and a genuine, well-bred hospitality.

Two young men entered, in figure and bearing like the older man, who introduced them to the guest as his sons; they were followed by the girl whom he had seen in the courtyard, and by various maids and bondmen. The housewife, aided by her daughter, busied herself about the hearth, and then all sat down to supper, the master of the house at the head of the great, square table of white, well-scoured boards, and his guest beside him.

The supper too was simple—as was everything in that house; hard-boiled eggs and salad, a kid, served with beans, and cheese. A jug of the light, watered wine stood on the table, and each filled his beaker as often as he wished.

After the meal the master of the house apportioned the labor for the following day. Then the women, the two sons and the servants stood up, wished the paterfamilias and the guest good night, and left the room with tired and heavy steps. The host and his guest were alone.

Silently the visitor gazed before him, dipping a finger in a

drop of spilt wine, and drawing intricate figures on the surface of the table. He was faced by the problem of the best way to begin the discussion which was really the reason of his presence in this bright, fruitful country, which was so unlike anything that he had hitherto seen.

But his host saved him the trouble of further consideration.

"You have been inquiring for me?"

The guest looked up, and gazed searchingly at the grave and rather severe features of the man before him, over which the fire cast a flickering light.

"You know—?"

"I was told." He added, in explanation: "By the peasant who showed you the way."

"Yes," nodded his guest, in answer to the first question. "I wanted to speak to you. I have a greeting to bring you: from Crassus."

The grey head bowed.

"I know Crassus. You are one of his friends?"

"We are working together." He looked about him. "Can I give you his message?"

Caburus laughed softly.

"Speak. There are no eavesdroppers in the country."

Despite this reassurance, the visitor lowered his voice.

"Crassus sends you this message," he said, leaning forward: "That you are to hold yourself in readiness. The time is near at hand when we shall try to do something for you."

Searchingly the clear eyes of the old man looked into those of the young one.

"Who are you?"

An impatient wave of the hand.

"I should have begun with that. Crassus sends word that you may trust me—by the oath of Mantua."

He stressed the last word.

Caburus raised his eyebrows and considered.

"Crassus must think very highly of you," he said finally, "if he has given you the password. . . Tell me—I trust you—Crassus is able to do something for us?"

"Crassus will shortly be Censor, and as such will have charge of the list of citizens. He will enter on this list all the names you give me."

The old man looked hard at him.

"That is promising a great deal."

"What Crassus promises he does." ("I know that," murmured Caburus). "The full civic rights, for which you have asked so long in vain, are as good as yours. I will not waste time on phrases: what this step means you know as well as I. But we expect from you that as payment for our trouble you will fulfill one condition."

"Conditions?" The old man frowned.

"None to which you could not agree. We are not inciting you to insurrection and revolution. But you must take a pledge that in good or evil you will be loyal to the people's party—and above all to Crassus and myself."

Caburus' brow grew no lighter.

"What need is there to speak of that?" he asked. "These conditions were long ago accepted. If there is nothing else—"

"The condition," interrupted his visitor, "applied only to the people's party. But Crassus and I—we both lay stress upon a personal pledge to ourselves." The old man looked at him distrustfully, but said nothing. His guest continued: "The people's party and ourselves—at present they mean one and the same thing. But it is a question whether they will remain so. In Rome everything is in flux. It may happen—I say it *may*—that there will be a change. Not today; not tomorrow; perhaps in ten, in fifteen years. We are both planning reforms with which the electors of the city will not agree; in respect of which they will leave us in the lurch. Then we must be able to rely at all events on our friends in the plains."

The old man was still silent; evidently he was pondering what he had heard. Then he asked, reserved and distrustful as before:

"You say: reforms. What do you mean by that?"

Once more the impatient wave of the hand.

"You still take me for a revolutionary, Caburus. I assure you that nothing lies further from my thoughts than to depart a single step from the established laws. All that I am concerned about, I repeat once more, is that I should have behind me, in the place of the city proletariat, of which I have no great opinion, the country, of which I have a very high opinion. Let us amplify the condition: You pledge yourself to unconditional loyalty to us so long as we do not demand anything of you that it contrary to the laws."

As before, the old man pondered this, word for word. Then he said, thoughtfully:

"That is reasonable." Once more he considered, and then nodded emphatically. "No one can object to that.—How long have you?"

"A week."

"That is enough. I will call together the responsible members of the league, and you can speak to them. I think they will see the matter as I do." He drew a deep breath. "All this mystery may seem strange to you. It is repugnant enough to ourselves. We should like to be Romans, good Romans. But if we were to wait until the great lords among you remembered our existence, we should all be old and grey before anything was done. So we have leagued ourselves together in order to work for what we desire in common. Not against the laws: that is our first principle, and even at the convention of Mantua no other decision was taken. We have resisted all temptations—and they have not been lacking. But as firmly as we insist on respect for the laws, so do we insist on what we regard as our rights. We have bled for the commonwealth; we pay our taxes to the commonwealth; and so we expect equality of rights."

"I think you are perfectly justified," nodded the guest, "and in testimony of my attitude towards you, I will tell you that it was I who advised Crassus to enter your names on the roll of citizens."

The old man looked at him in surprise, and then said slowly:

"I have asked your name once already. Do not think me obtrusively curious if I ask again."

The stranger rose, disregarding the old man's words. "It grows late," he said, "and tomorrow and the following days we have a great deal of work before us. Will you be so kind as to show me where I am sleeping?" He walked slowly to the door, halted, and turned again, "My name? My name will tell you nothing: It is Caesar. Caius Julius Caesar."

THE DEMAGOGUE

"Fellow citizens!" With renewed force the clear voice rang across the whole wide market-place, plainly audible from the Temple of Concord to that of the Keepers of the Hearth. "The Conservatives invoke their tradition. Tradition is the pretext on which they reduce you to service; tradition is their every other word. And indeed I myself am a supporter of tradition; I respect it, I revere it, I love it." (An absolute silence.) "But the whole trouble is that the conservatives really have no tradition!" (Shouts of applause, mingled with cries of "Oh! Oh!")

"Some of you doubt that; but I will prove it to you. What were the venerable ancestors of our aristocrats? Do not let yourselves be deluded by fine phrases: they were peasants," (cries of delight) "just ordinary peasants," (increased jubilation) "nothing but peasants!" (Tempestuous agreement.) "The peasant Fabius," (applause) "the peasant Mucius," (cries of "That's right!") "the peasant Cornelius," (silence: for Sulla was a Cornelius! and then a burst of enthusiasm) "the peasant Julius!" (A tempestuous roar of delight. It seemed as though the people would storm the tribune and lift the speaker on to their shoulders.) "Where was Cincinnatus when he was sent for—Cincinnatus, who is held up to you as a shining example of civic virtue? He was at the plough-tail!" (Persistent clapping of hands.) "Where was Curius Dentatus when he rejected the presents of the Samnites—an example, by the way, such as we should seek in vain among our aristocratic gentlemen of today?" (Laugh-

ter.) "He was sitting by the fire, slicing turnips for his dinner! ("Turnips! Turnips! D'you hear?"—"Be quiet! He's speaking!")

"But peasants are obliged to know something of husbandry, and when they grow richer, of estate management, and when they rise a little higher, of the affairs of the community, and when they are quite important people, of political economy!" (A renewed roar of delight.) "Otherwise, of course, they are useless!" ("That's so!") "For what is the difference between the management of a State and husbandry? The difference is only one of degree!" ("That's true!") "If the peasant wants to get milk from his cow, he sees to it first of all that she has suitable food and is properly looked after, for he knows that one cannot take where one does not give! Then he can milk her as much as he likes—both he and the cow will be contented. But the gentry who govern us have not even the sense to understand so much!" (Cries of assent.) "They believe they can squeeze out of their provinces whatever they contain, without reflecting that the milch-cow suffers by the process, and will finally die of it!" (Emphatic agreement.) "And then the central authorities are amazed, and ask themselves what can be the reason of the progressive decline of our richest provinces. And what is the reason? It is simply the criminal stupidity of this system, which ought at last to be publicly pilloried!" (Furious hand-clapping.) "Perhaps it will then be possible to knock a little common sense into some of these hopelessly obtuse minds!" (Cries of: "Can't be done!")

"To be sure, I myself don't believe it is possible! For these distinguished gentry the affairs of the party take precedence of everything, even over their own interests, which are the interests of us all. The only way to let light into such heads as these is to knock holes in them!" (Tumult, and a shout: "Are you looking for men to help you do it?")

"I am looking for men!" (Exultant applause.) "Men who are determined to endure the rule of the Senate no longer. And wherever I look in this market-place, I see such men

and no others!" (Vigorous assent.) "With the exception of a few who have sold themselves to the Senate and whom I can only commiserate!" (Angry cries of "Shame!") "With these men I will go before the Curia and counsel the mummies assembled there to give us a decent government as quickly as possible, for otherwise the people themselves will take the matter in hand; Caveant consules! Let them look to themselves!" He flung the concluding words at the Senate with clenched fists that suddenly flew open, and drew back amidst an unending storm of applause.

Crassus, who had remained at the back of the tribune, stepped up to the speaker and wrung his hand.

"Well spoken, Caesar!" he said in commendation.

"Criminal nonsense, of course," said Caesar drily. "Fortunately no one takes it seriously—least of all the enemy, who will be adequately disconcerted.—Ah, there is Cato already, snorting like an angry bull."

"But by an exception, sober," said Crassus, scathingly. "Let us be off."

They descended the steps, Crassus, with Caesar, going first, and the other party leaders, headed by Manilius, Gabinius and Capito, following in little groups that were ripe for mischief. Their expressions were sweetly amiable, but their covert glances betrayed chagrin and disapproval and barely suppressed rage.

Caesar took no notice of them. His clear eyes were sweeping the market-place.

"This people is incapable of reflection," he said. "It will follow, through thick and thin, the man who holds the biggest mouthful in front of its insatiable jaws. In the tongue of the greatest orator, the brain of the cleverest statesmen, there's not half so much power as in one of your cash-boxes."

"You may be right," agreed Crassus, with a rattling laugh, which seemed to come straight from his diaphragm.

In one of the side-streets the others, apparently unable to contain themselves any longer, fell upon them like a flock of angry kites overwhelming them with their scathing criti-

cisms, reproaches, and threats. They seemed all to be shouting at once; but Gabinius, in particular, was almost beside himself.

"A fine pass we have come to!" he screamed, convulsively waving his arms as though beating time to his words. "Cicero, yesterday our friend, is today our bitterest enemy; the clever trick with the Transpadanian roll of citizens has failed, and Pompeius, whom we helped into the saddle, is unassailable and impregnable! Bravo! That's the way to lead a party!"

Caesar, though inwardly boiling with rage, was outwardly nonchalant as ever; Crassus, on the other hand, appeared to be losing patience.

"There is one thing that you have forgotten," he growled, with a wry look at Gabinius.

"What is that?"

"That I provide no more money."

A moment of paralyzed dismay—and then a renewed clamour of voices; but this time its purport was very different. A few words had sufficed to expose their actual motives; the sole object of their wrangling was to re-establish their declining status in the party. Now Crassus was snatching the ground from under their feet!

In stammering, excited phrases they began to persuade him, frantically striving to save the most important thing of all: a fat living in the ranks of the party.

Suddenly the din was silenced. A shout ran out that was like the swift, violent rending of a heavy curtain. All raised their heads to listen, stretching and twisting their necks; Caesar stood before them, his whole body trembling with almost inarticulate rage.

"What manner of men are you?" he gasped. "Out yonder the world is being partitioned—kingdoms are as cheap as hazel-nuts—and you cower at home here and squabble over a few crumbs! Fools! Blockheads! Shame upon you!"

They were silent; they gaped at him uncomprehendingly; the ideas which his volcanic nature had hurled at them were so tersely phrased that they could not at once grasp them.

Crassus, who, as a financier, was accustomed to abbreviated thinking, was the first to understand him. Caesar's words fell upon him like fire.

"Caesar is right," he roared. "We had what would have led us to the heights! You have left us shamefully in the lurch—thinking only of the well-covered table at which you were sitting! And you try to reproach us? No, no? I have had enough! If I give you *so* much more"—and he snapped his gesticulating fingers—"it will mean that you will have to knuckle under! Do you understand?"

Gabinius, Capito and Manilius exchanged glances. The two stood before them like statues, frozen images of wrath: Caesar pale, almost green, and Crassus crimson, with blotches of purple. Yet another quick exchange of glances, and Manilius asked, almost submissively:

"What—what do you require of us?"

The blood ebbed from Crassus' face. The muscles of his jaws stood out beneath their cushioning of fat. His mouth was rigid and compressed.

"Blind obedience to our decisions," he said, harshly and brutally. "What we lay before the public is to be supported unconditionally. The man who opposes us goes!"

"That is dictatorship!" gasped Gabinius, with failing voice.

The icy gaze of the financier fastened on him like a palpable weight.

"Is not that actually the final goal of democracy?" He turned away, and without vouchsafing his speechless antagonists another word or glance, he entered his house, before which they were standing, with Caesar at his side. The rest followed, a tame flock.

Half an hour later all was over. Manilius had submitted, recommending obedience, and promising to discipline the subordinate leaders and agitators. Capito followed suit. Gabinius went to Pompeius in Asia, and Caesar had one more deadly enemy. . .

PANEM ET CIRCENSES

"WHAT?—No, the seat is still unoccupied. Sit down and make yourself comfortable.—Wait, I'll move a little.—There you see, that't all right. Do anything with a little good will!—Am I what?—Yes—no—I'm quite comfortable. I don't need much room. As far as that goes, neighbor, you're not one of the fat ones yourself. Well, well, these aren't exactly the times for getting fat. We are always hearing of victories—victories here and victories there, now in Asia and now in Africa—but you wouldn't know the difference here in Rome. Flour is getting dearer every day. And this special price for corn is a rotten business: the corn finds its way into the warehouses of the speculators, and the buyer gets the husks.—What did you say?—I'd better tell you, I'm rather hard of hearing: At Aquae Sextiae some German blackguard gave me such a crack on the skull that I've been rather deaf ever since.—Yes, I am one of Marius' veterans. A superannuated maniple-leader of the Sixth. Three chains of honor, two medals and a wreath. Haven't worn so badly for a man of sixty, have I? I've fought against the negroes, Jugurtha's men; ah, and we were too much for Sulla's lot, and then I've seen fighting against the Cimbri and the Teutoni. Yes, those were the times! In those days we still had officers and generals worth talking about! Yes indeed: yes, when I think of Marius! He was one of us, he was; not like those noble gentlemen you meet nowadays, who hold their noses if they smell an onion. A rough tongue he had, and sharp as a knife, but what he said he meant; ah, and he was like a father to his soldiers, he was, if only they'd done their duty proper. They couldn't forgive him that in Rome, and that's why they let that Sulla loose on him. He couldn't do anything with Marius while he was alive, and that is why, mean fellow that he was, he had his grave torn open in his rage, and smashed up his monument on the Capitol. Well, Caesar has put things right again.—What? Why, where do you come from, that you don't know that?—Oh, I see, you've been travelling. Well then, listen:

Caesar is aedile now, isn't he? You know, of course, Marius was his uncle. His aunt, I believe, was our old man's wife. A splendid fellow!—Yes, but I was going to tell you—what was it I was going to tell you?—Oh, I know! The monument to Marius, the memorial column! All those years the bits were lying about, and no one was allowed to touch them, and it cut us old soldiers to the heart, every time we passed them. That was how things were till Caesar was made aedile. Then, one morning—it was about a fortnight ago—almost before I was up, my neighbor came in to me—he's another old veteran—he was at Vercellae—and he said to me: 'Well, Lucius, have you heard the news?'—'No, what should I have heard?' I said: 'I don't go anywhere,' I said—'They say the monument to Marius is set up again,' he said. Do you know, that went through my old bones, so that I had to sit down again. 'What's that you tell me?' I shouted. 'The monument to Marius is set up again,' he said once more. 'Some people who have just come back from the Roman market are just saying so.' Well, you can imagine how I felt! 'Sextus,' I said, '*We* must go and see that for ourselves,' and so we marched off on our old legs, which had taken us over the sands of Numidia, and up and down the Alps, and we went into the market. As we came to the arch of Janus the crowd was getting thicker and thicker, and no one was talking about anything else. We worked our way through the crowd, a step at a time—and suddenly I saw it all in front of me, clean and shining, as though it had been put up yesterday: the statue of Marius in the centre, and the trophies to the right and left of it. I can't tell you how I felt about it; my old head hummed as it did at Aquae Sextiae, my knees gave way all of a sudden, and there was such a lump in my throat—in the end, old donkey that I was, I began to howl! And the other fellows—Marius' men—the place was swarming with them—were just the same! That splendid young fellow, Caesar, had had the memorial put up again overnight! We shall never forget that! The big men were terribly angry about it; old Catulus, in the Senate, even called him a revolu-

tionary; but Caesar only laughed, and said: 'According to you everyone who rebuilds anything is a revolutionary.' And they haven't dared to knock the memorial down again.

"Am I tiring you with my chatter? I am so pleased when anyone will listen to me that I don't know where to stop. They've got no time for me at home; my daughter—my son is with Pompeius in Asia—has married a green grocer, on the other side of the Tiber, and they've got their hands full all day. Well, when the grandchildren come their grandfather will have someone he can chatter to. The first is on the way already; it ought to be here in another two months. If it's a boy he shall serve under Caesar some day.—What's that? Ho, Ho! The nephew of Marius no soldier? Just give him a chance—he'll soon show what he can do! But they won't give it him, because they know he thinks as his uncle did. They'd like to drown him in a puddle if they could. But they won't get him down so easy, not they! You wait a bit, my friend, you wait a bit , and you'll see something.

"What does the fellow say?—Do I want any figs? No, I don't want any figs.—No, no, don't go buying any!—Well, he's done well out of you!—No, no, thanks; really, no!—Well then, just one, not to offend you.—H'm, they're good, if they are dear!—What, another?—That was a good one. Cooling, they are! It's really silly of me to come all this way in the heat, but I never miss a show. No, I warrant you I don't now that Caesar has the management of them! Do you know how many couples of gladiators he had in the arena not so long ago? Three hundred and twenty? Armed from head to foot in silver; helmet, shield, greaves and sword-hilt—everything. And that is nothing; at the wild beast shows—and he has had every possible sort of hunting: deer, wild boars, wolves, leopards, lions, tigers—at those shows even the cages are of silver! Pure silver! Man, can you realize what that means? And what it cost? They say his debts are enormous, and the big men are hoping to trip him up that way. But they are out of their reckoning: Crassus is the richest man in Rome, and he won't let him come to harm!

"Nothing is too dear for the people; that's what Caesar thinks. He's like to ruin himself for us. And he helps anyone he can. His door and his purse are open to everyone. If anyone has any troubles, he goes to Caesar, and no one goes away unconsoled. I don't know how many lawsuits he hasn't undertaken for poor devils who couldn't help themselves! Many a man has reason to thank him that he's still got a roof over his head. Caesar is the shield of the weak and the support of the aged. And for that reason he must go up on top, even if the big men burst with rage! He'll soon clear 'em out! He'll bring all those aristocratic scoundrels to justice; all those swindlers who are hiding behind their friends! Caesar treats all men alike! Didn't he drag the noble exploiters of the provinces into court? And didn't he get Sulla's murder-gang condemned?

"But we'll have to wait a bit, for he says he won't do anything contrary to the law. But in two years' time he'll be praetor; two years now, and we'll make him consul; and then Rome will be a different place. The high prices will go, and every day there'll be fresh sports! It'll be the Golden Age when Caesar is consul!

"You are laughing? What are you laughing at? Aren't you ashamed, young man, to laugh at an old man, a veteran of Marius' army? What is there to laugh at in what I've said? Perhaps you're of a different way of thinking, eh? Perhaps you are one of the big fellows, Caesar's enemies, who—What? What?—By Jove, it's the man himself! Salve Caesar!"

Still laughing, Caesar rose, pressed the rest of the figs into the old man's hand—his wrinkled face was grinning toothlessly from ear to ear—clapped him on the shoulder, and went up the steps of the amphitheatre to his official box, in order to give the sign for the performance to begin.

THUNDERCLOUDS

"WHAT has the old man done to you?"

Caesar did not answer immediately; he quietly peeled his orange, popped a segment into his mouth, chewed and swallowed it, and then said, comfortably:

"Done? To me? Nothing."

Servilia half rose from her comfortable position, assured herself, with a quick glance, that little Marcus was still playing quietly in the sand at her feet, and continued:

"Was the man who has been killed such an important personality?"

"Saturninus?" He smiled, a little contemptuously. "By no means; he was a revolutionary people's tribune, a man of obscure and murky ideas and motives, who instigated a rebellion, and but for what Rabirius did would probably have been condemned to death."

"Then did Rabirius do right?" Caesar, since he had just put a fresh segment of orange into his mouth, could only shake his head.

"And besides," continued Servilia "the thing, as you say, happened thirty-four years ago—"

"Thirty-six," amended Caesar. "I was then just one year old."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Anyhow," she said, "I cannot see why you have dragged this old, forgotten story into the light."

"I?" Caesar's eyes twinkled with saisfaction. "The accusation was made by the people's tribune Labienus."

"Don't be evasive!" she interrupted, with some impatience. "To say Labienus is equivalent to saying Caesar."

He leaned back, clasped his hands behind his head, and gazed up into the blue sky.

"I have dragged the old story into the light," he said, reverting to her former question, "because—well, just because it was old and forgotten. I wanted to make it clear to the other party that crimes don't become superannuated—not even after thirty-six years."

"But Rabirius has not committed a crime! You say yourself that but for him Saturninus would have been condemned to death!"

Caesar raised his eyebrows, emitted a sound that was half

a whistle and half a sigh, and waved his lifted fore-finger admonishingly to and fro.

"The truth of the matter is not quite as you see it, Vilia," he said. "He would have been *condemned* to death. That is precisely the point! He had a right to a proper trial."

"But that is a mere matter of form!"

"Oh no!" Caesar spoke vivaciously, as always when he encountered opposition. "It is not a mere matter of form! It is a matter of safeguarding the most ancient and fundamental rights of the Roman citizen, and above all the Lex Portia, the right of appeal to the assembled community."

She was now all attention. Caesar could see that her keen, disciplined mind was endeavoring to grasp the scope and significance of the affair.

"You think," she said, hesitating, "that if Saturninus had appealed to the community—"

"May the vultures take Saturninus!" he cried, impatiently. "The people, it is to be presumed, could not have given any other verdict. But the people was not asked, and that is the point. Listen!" He moved closer to her, and began to explain: "The conservatives have allowed the authorization which was granted to the Senate, permitting them to set up martial law in case of necessity, to become a customary right. The dispute is no new thing; it goes back to the days of the Gracchi. At that time the immunity of the people's tribunes did not prevent the Curia from disposing of the two brothers. Since that time innumerable and fruitless attemps have been made to revive the right of appeal. Now I am going to try again, in my own way, and this time—" he quietly laughed "—I think I shall succeed."

She considered his words eagerly, pondering them point by point.

"If I understand you rightly," she then said, slowly, "you mean to contrive that Rabirius shall be condemned, because he infringed this right of appeal."

"Perfectly correct," he nodded.

"And then? What will be gained by that? Do you imagine

the Senate will leave him in the lurch? Is not the fact that the Consul, that Cicero himself is undertaking to defend him, a more than obvious sign that the conservatives intend to make the cause of Rabirius their own?"

"Perfectly correct," he repeated.

"Well then—"

"Well, then!" He clapped his hands like a delighted child, but controlled himself, and when he spoke it was in a matter-of-fact tone. "Rabirius will appear before the ministerial tribunal; he will be condemned—to death; there is no getting away from that. And then—in order to escape the execution of the sentence—then—"

"Then?"

"Then—he himself will make his appeal to the assembled community!" cried Caesar, laughing. "He himself will be compelled—and with him the whole Senatorial party—to revive the much-disputed, ever-denied right of the people! Isn't that amusing! Isn't that a splendid jest?" He was shaking with laughter.

But Servilia was grave.

"The idea," she said quietly, "is ingenious. Only—"

"Only?"

"Only I don't understand how you can be willing, for the sake of this question of principle—pardon me, it is nothing more—to step over a man's corpse. And that you can even laugh over it, that—that—"

An involuntary shudder choked her utterance.

Caesar too had ceased to laugh.

"I might reply that the law has a right to demand this sacrifice since so many men have fallen in an unjust cause; and moreover, that Rabirius, an old blood-hound and man-catcher, deserves no pity; but I don't want his blood; nothing will happen to the old man; the terror he will suffer will be his only punishment."

Servilia did not understand.

"Do you believe, then, that the community will absolve him?"

"It won't go as far as that," he replied. "The whole thing is arranged already. Cicero was with me for hours yesterday, negotiating. When the matter is before the community, right in the midst of the proceedings, the assembly will be dissolved for some formal reason—because the sacred cocks are not eating, or something of that sort—and the case will finally sink into oblivion. Do you understand now? The Senate will get its Rabirius, the people will recover the right that has been withheld, and both parties will be delighted with the upshot!" Well pleased with himself, he took another orange, and began to peel it.

She gazed at him thoughtfully.

"You are a terrible man," she said at last. "I should not like to be your enemy."

He waved his hand.

"There are worse. I am easily conciliated where I see good will." And he applied himself to his orange with evident satisfaction. The last segment he popped into the mouth of little Marcus, who was still playing quietly and sedately on the sand.

"Mark well, my son," he said, smiling, "the law comes before everything. If anyone infringes it, oppose him with all your might, even if he is your own father. But always without a feeling of revenge."

The child gazed at him with his large, dark eyes—the eyes of his mother—as though he understood the words. Servilia suppressed a sigh.

"He is always so quiet," she said, softly. "I am often afraid that he will be a dreamer."

"Time will show," he reassured her, cheerfully. "Once when I was a child I heard my father say that I should become a regular bookworm. I had just come in from quite a respectable fight."

There was a pause, while Servilia watched the constantly changing expression of Caesar's face. At last he continued:

"Next week is the election of the pontiff."

"Already?" Involuntarily she shrank from the idea.

He laughed good-humoredly, and nodded.

"There again I have stirred up a pretty wasps' nest! The whole of the nobles are up in arms! It hasn't entered their lordships' heads that this office, which they have always kept among themselves, might for once go to an outsider. They have even made the first nominations against me: the Consuls Quintus Lucatius Catulus and my old commander, Publius Servilius Isauricus, your respected uncle. First there was a tremendous outcry over my presumptive bribery of the electors —as though they themselves were not paying out a pretty sum!—and then, as that was no use, offered me quite a handsome sum if I would withdraw my candidature."

She had to laugh at his description.

"And you?" she asked.

"I have sent him word that I will spend an even greater sum to assure my election."

"And you think—"

Suddenly his laughing face became serious.

"I think," he said very quietly, but in a lifeless tone, "that in the event of defeat there is nothing left for it but that." He pointed to the ring in whose hollow gem he always, as she knew, carried poison.

She turned white—pale as death.

"You won't do that!" she cried.

"I must," he said, in the same lifeless tone. "I have staked all on one cast of the dice; if I am not elected I am ruined."

She stared before her. There was a long pause. Then, tonelessly:

"And all that—on account of a mere gratification of vanity."

He shook his head.

"Nothing is further from me," he said. "But I need a place which will give me a surer footing when the storm bursts."

She looked up in alarm.

"There is something more?"

"Pompeius has brought the war against Mithridates and

the pirates to a victorious conclusion, and is on the way home with his army."

She knew what that meant.

"The new Sulla," she whispered. He nodded.

"Without Marius. Unless some miracle occurs we are faced with the dictatorship."

THE BRIDGE-BUILDER

In the hall he met only his mother. She was sitting with her embroidery under the opening in the roof, in order to have sufficient light. When she heard him coming she laid aside the embroidery-frame and rose.

"Is there no one else here?" he asked.

Before his mother could answer there was a reply from another direction: from the colonnade leading to the garden. A slender, fluttering shape emerged from the shadow of the verandah, and then a dark-haired school-girl laughingly flung her arms round his neck.

"You, Julia?" he cried, surprised and delighted.

"Oh, father!" she stammered breathlessly, "I got up early on purpose to wish you luck! You are to get all the votes, you are to be elected by all the tribes!"

He lifted the delicate face to his and kissed the pure lips.

"My best thanks, my dear child!" he said warmly. "I know that you at least honestly mean what you say."

She snuggled up to him.

"Who could do anything but wish my darling father everything of the very best?" she flattered him, "You are the best, noblest and dearest person in the whole world. You ought really to rule the whole empire."

He smiled, a little resignedly.

"Then I should have still less time for you."

Impetuously she flung herself upon his breast.

"That doesn't matter. A silly girl like me mustn't keep you all to herself. You belong to all Rome! I am quite contented if I can stand in the background and look on. I am so proud of you, father!"

"Ah!" Already, through the tenderness of his tone, a slight abstraction was perceptible. The sensitive child noted it.

"But I'm chattering—and of course you want to talk to grandmother.—So once more, darling father, I wish you everything, everything that's good!" and singing softly, she disappeared as she had come.

Caesar gazed after her; the smile slowly faded from his face, and was replaced by an expression of forced composure. In profound meditation, with bowed head, he began to pace to and fro. His mother followed him with considering eyes. At last she asked, in a tone of motherly solicitude:

"You did not sleep well?"

"Not well," he replied. "I had stupid dreams." He returned to the big arm-chair, and struck the back lightly with his clenched fist. "I wish the whole crazy business were not necessary."

She understood him perfectly; nevertheless, she asked:

"What do you mean?"

He vaguely waved his hand. "All this business today. You can more or less imagine, Mother, my private attitude to the pontificate."

"Then why—"

"You are not the first to ask me. Because I need a support; because I can't go further as I am." His uneasiness compelled him to confess frankly what had so long oppressed him. "I thought the whole thing would be quite different. I thought it would be possible to make men realize where their own interests lay. But there was one thing I did not reckon with: the immensity of human vanity." He lifted his head, and looked at his mother with the eyes of a hunted animal. "Do you know what I have really been doing all these years? Tying threads that are constantly broken. And earning no one's thanks for doing so. At first all went well; Pompeius is a power, and Crassus is a power. By the most fundamental laws of political mathematics, the combination of the two would mean not an addition but a multiplication of their powers. And they both seemed to under-

stand that: it was Crassus who sent me to Pompeius, and Pompeius was glad enough to take the hand that was offered him; at that time it was doubly welcome. But after a little while things went wrong; a squabble over ridiculous trivialities, and mutual taunts and sarcasms—and today Pompeius is completely estranged from us, and is already making eyes at the Senate. And Crassus—" he swallowed, and concluded, speaking half to himself: "Crassus is on the point of committing a fresh stupidity."

"Catilina," nodded his mother. He turned round quickly. "You know?"

"The whole of Rome is talking of nothing else."

"Yes, Catilina," he nodded. "Not contented with his defeat of last year, the desperate man means to try his luck again in the present election to the Consulate, and Crassus is providing the funds. This will go on till something happens that is past mending."

He interrupted himself; some members of the electoral committee had entered the hall. Instantly he was once more the aimiable, courteous, aristocratic host. He advanced to meet them and greeted them.

"It is time," said one of them: he was the mule-dealer, Bassus, one of the most useful agitators of the people's party. "We have come to fetch you."

"I am ready," he nodded. Turning to his mother, he gave her his hand and took his leave of her, with the hesitating smile of a child about to face a difficult examination.

With an impulsive movement she flung her arms about him, and kissed him on either cheek.

"Good-bye, Caius," she whispered. "And come home early."

He drew himself up. The boyish expression had vanished; the face that confronted her was tense with a last, desperate resolve.

"As Pontifex or not at all," he replied briefly.

Slowly he left the hall.

* * * * *

The market-place and the streets adjacent to it were densely packed with people, pushing and threading their way through the crowd, gathering themselves into groups, some of which were imitating, without much success, the inimitable dignity of the *civis romanus*, while others were quarrelling with genuine southern vivacity. Agitators of the different parties were diligently hurrying to and fro.

Electors looked about for members of their *comitium*, edging round them as a faithful sheepdog watches a grazing flock. Here and there a priest or an official, with a solemn and unapproachable expression, pushed his way through the murmuring, gossiping, quarrelling, laughing throng.

Caesar was recognized immediately. The people greeted him, made room for him, and called out to him, bidding him keep his heart up. He thanked them, with a calm and cheerful expression, which no one suspected to be forced; he waved a friendly greeting to men with whom he had already had dealings, his incredible memory for names and faces never failing him, passing through the crowd as a patron through a chamber full of clients.

His companions led him to the tribune—not in order that he should speak to the people, for on the day of the election speeches were no longer admissible, but for the usual exhibition of the candidate. When the well-known, slender figure appeared on the tribune the crowd raised a shout which ebbed only to rise again, and it was some minutes before the breaking billows of sound finally died away. The opposition candidates on the other side of the tribune, Lucatius Catulus and Servilius Isauricus, looked on askance. Caesar's old commander gave him a reproachful glance. Catulus' florid face was scarlet under his snow-white hair, and he barely acknowledged Caesar's courteous greeting.

"Two new enemies," Caesar noted objectively.

"You have never paid them," replied Bassus, with quick comprehension.

"No, only weighed them.—Shall we go?"

* * * * *

The headquarters of the people's party were in the house of the banker Lucceius, one of Crassus' business friends. The showy-looking hall, over-filled with artistic treasures from all parts of the world, whose walls were accustomed to look down on only the anxious faces of financial magnates, or the sly and secretive countenances of Syrian and Jewish brokers and money-changers, now entertained a very different company; delegation after delegation entered, all consisting of men of the plebs, who attached great importance to a last personal interview with their candidate: idle city proletarians, craftsmen and small tradesmen, merchants and peasants. It was possible to classify them as soon as they entered the hall: the Suburran or Transtiberian threw quick and insolently curious glances at the splendors exhibited on every hand; the craftsman or petty trader stood modestly apart from the rest, as though waiting to be paid for work done or goods supplied; while the husbandman, lurching with his heavy peasant's gait over the costly mosaic floor, was overcome with dull amazement, quite stupefied by his brilliant surroundings.

Caesar found for every man the fitting word; to the emotional speeches of the proletarian delegates he responded with a bright, soulless smile and polished phrases, and to the clumsy periods of the craftsmen and petty traders with pithy and pertinent pledges, pressing the soft, lax fingers of hands that had forgotten how to work, and the horny palms of peasants and craftsmen. The elastic vigour of his movements, the clear brilliance of his eyes, betrayed no trace of his sleepless nights and unquiet days. His natural ardour seemed to warm the chill, stately hall.

To one delegation of peasants he gave rather more time than to the others. It came from one of the few communes of Transpadana in which the full civic rights were already enjoyed.

"Were you long on the road?" he asked their leader.

"Ten days," was the laconic answer.

"How are things looking at home?"

"Good: we are all of one mind."

Caesar came to the point:

"I hope they know in Transpadana what is in *my* mind."

"We know, and we trust you," replied the old peasant. The others nodded silently; and the weight of their gaze was almost as palpable as the pressure of their horny hands.

"I was mistaken," he told Bassus when the delegation had left him and he was strangely moved. "I thought this election was one of the usual city affairs; but now I see that it is a thing affecting the whole of the people."

"Did I not tell you so?" Under the low brow of the mule-dealer the keen black eyes flashed for a moment. "Today, for once, the mighty ones will learn what the people really think."

"The polling has begun!" cried a shrill voice from the entrance. The delegates, urban and provincial, hurried from the hall. Caesar was left alone with the few members of the electoral committee.

In a moment, as though blown away by a wind, their solemn bearing disappeared. A few of the members brought out their breakfasts and began to eat and to gossip; Bassus withdrew into a corner with a rat-faced, rather grimy youth, and began to check some kind of list or calculation. No one troubled about Caesar.

This did not perturb him; he had been lonely ever since he could remember. There were indeed times when he found comrades to help him to realize his plans and his ideas, but when this was done they left him alone—and he would not have had it otherwise. His last and profoundest thoughts he could reveal to no one; always a final barrier, tenuous but impenetrable, shut him off from his kind.

And so today his loneliness left him unconcerned; he did not even regret it. He looked for a quiet place, sat down in a dimly-lighted corner, and gazed idly before him. The first partial results could hardly come in for another hour. Until then he must be patient; he must wait.

And now that he was able to rest awhile he was conscious

of his exhaustion. His eyes burned; his limbs gradually relaxed; his heavy head sank on to a supporting hand. He fell into a strange intermediate state between sleeping and waking, in which he was still continuously conscious of what was going on around him, and yet images rose into his mind that were surely the images of a dream. He saw this and that man moving about the hall; he heard the cadence of their speech; and yet . . . at one and the same time . . .

He could have found no words to describe what rose before him. To his first vague perception it seemed like a gigantic head. But now that it had gained in distinctness he felt that human speech had no word, no conception which would define it. It gazed upon him—and yet it had no eyes; rather it was itself all eye; it spoke to him—and yet it had no mouth; rather it was itself a mouth. In this unearthly apparition all sensual functions seemed to revert to their fundamental essence; they needed no mediate organs; they were active of their own virtue. And it was not as though this were outside him; somehow—he himself could not explain how—he was one with this unnameable thing; he was a part of it, and yet the whole; at once object and subject.

"Who art thou?" he asked at length. His lips, his tongue did not move; nevertheless he knew that the question was put and heard.

"I am not thou," it replied, "but thou art I."

"Art thou a natural or a supernatural being?" he asked further. "Art thou one of the gods of the upper regions, or one of the lower?"

"I am both natural and divine," sounded the answer. "Where I am is neither upper nor lower."

"I do not understand thee."

"I am all which thou perceivest with thy senses, feelest with thy heart, thinkest with thy brain. There is nothing outside me, for all things are within me: the babbling of the child at the breast and the profoundest thought of the ancient sage; the breathing of the grasses and the mysterious

growth of the crystal; the whirling of atoms and the sacred and immemorial revolutions of the heavenly bodies."

"Thou art then the Cosmos—Harmony?"

Something that was like an affirmative, perceived, yet inexpressible as all the rest of his experience. . .

"These are names under which thou mayest apprehend me."

"Why dost thou reveal thyself to me?" What wouldst thou of me?"

"I wish to show thee the way to me, to make thee conscious of the power within thyself. At certain epochs I set up landmarks, which guide all activities into convergent paths, corner-stones that are the foundations of my building. Thou callest them warriors, statesmen, the pioneers of great ideas. Their destiny it is to be the fixed points in a dance of ephemeridae, to be active beyond themselves, to influence their time by the emanations of their personalities. They are the implements with which I perfect the raw material, purging life of its dross, in order to lead it to the last, the highest goal; to completion.—Behold!"

Something like a breath fanned Caesar's face; cloudy films rose and fell before his eyes, and changing images, now vivid and now barely perceptible, began to emerge. . . A forest path, overshadowed by the boughs of unknown trees. A little house beside a track that lost itself in the woods. Before the house a black ox, bridled and saddled like a horse. A half-grown youth in strange garments, with yellow, alien features, was holding the bridle. Like black diamonds the eyes glittered between their narrowed lids.

Two men emerged from the house; one a very old man, whose long snow-white beard fell to his girdle, and one younger. Both were clad in the same flowing garments; both wore their long hair knotted on the top of the head.

The old man went up to the saddled ox, the younger escorting him with every sign of profound veneration. He gave his escort a book, which the latter accepted with reverence. He mounted the beast, looked down on the others with a gentle smile, in which there was yet something inde-

scribably remote, and rode away, preceded by the boy. He disappeared in the forest. . .

The other, standing where the rider had left him, glanced at the book in his hands. Caesar could plainly see three unknown characters painted in black on the cover. He could not decipher them, but he knew what they meant: "The Book of the Way and of Virtue."

"They called him 'the old master'," * said the Nameless One beside him—nay, within him. "Millions have learned of him."

* * * * *

Another picture. Once more a forest; once more unfamiliar trees; not reaching high into the heavens, but spreading in luxuriant growth, covered with great shining blossoms, and swathed in hanging creepers. Tall-stemmed grasses and broad-leaved plants covered the ground. A circle of dark-skinned men were seated around one to whom all were listening. On their foreheads were fiery red symbols. Caesar could not turn his gaze from the teacher's face. In his large, calm eyes he found the same smiling gentleness as in the eyes of the "old master," but this was mingled with an infinite repose, which spread its influence abroad like something physical, like a centre of virtue that drew all things into its clarmed sphere. While the teacher spoke it seemed to grow light about him; all shadows faded, growing fainter, as though absorbed—until the whole picture was dissolved in an infinitely gentle yet overpowering radiance.

"He is known as the Jewel in the Lotus." † Again Caesar heard the voice of the Nameless One.

* * * * *

Another picture. This time Caesar recognized it; here was the grove of the Academe in Athens. Greek gentlemen, of noble bearing and fashionably clad, were pacing the well-kept gravel paths. One of them attracted his attention: a tall, handsome man, whose full beard, already turning grey, over-

* Lâo-Tsze. (*Tr.*)

† Gautama Buddha. (*Tr.*)

shadowed his mighty chest. He was listening to the eager speech of his companion, but his gaze, grave and collected, pierced through the superficial mask and saw the essence of the inner man. And with the same power of perception this gaze penetrated all that it rested on; houses, trees, the earth, the heavens. They dissolved before it, without disintegrating; they had no secrets from him, but willingly and submissively yielded that which gave them being—their Idea.

"His master, who drank of the hemlock, used to call him 'the Broad-breasted.' "

"Plato," murmured Caesar. "And the others?"

"They are far from thee, very far.—Wouldst thou see the future?"

"Aye."

Again the wavering veils, from which images began to emerge. They were thinner now, more colorless, perceptible only for a moment, impressions rather than visions.

Here were men upon the shore of a great water, motionless, crowded together. They were listening to the words of one who was speaking to them from a boat. His raiment was poor as that of the others, but from his pale, noble countenance there shone such a light of love that it enveloped all as in a visible radiance. Breathlessly they listened to him, and on all these harassed, care-worn faces glowed a reflection of that light; and they grew calm and appeased. So wholly did this light unite them that they seemed in the end like one single being, shining with the radiance of the speaker.

"He will be called 'the Son of Man,' and he will come to take upon himself all the sorrows of the world."

Caesar sighed deeply.

"Thou showest me sages, O Teacher. Show me a man such as I am: a statesman. . ." he hesitated, for he was not yet that: "a warrior."

A flash of light, close before his eyes. Then another; then yet more; then many flashes. It was some time before he could realize the scene. He saw a hill, and from the hill were spurting flashes of fire. They were everywhere; they rose from the

ground and leapt into the air; long, licking tongues of flame were darting in all directions. Shadowy human figures ran hither and thither, handling unfamiliar weapons in an incomprehensible fashion. All things were swathed in thick, grey smoke.

A troop of horsemen came tearing up, and halted. One of them, riding a white horse, detached himself from the rest and rode along their front. For a moment Caesar saw his fattish, pale, beardless face; a face that seemed to be chiselled in marble, with dark, imperious eyes. His horse shied, rearing at the fiery flashes, but he controlled it with an iron hand. His eyes, gazing fixedly into the distance, seemed to draw what they saw into themselves. Then, with a few curt words to one of the horsemen who had hurried to his side, he turned and galloped away. "He will be known as 'the Man of the Island'," said the silent Voice. "From an island will he come; on an island will he die. But between whiles the world will tremble before him."

Caesar hesitated.

"And my destiny?"

"Thy destiny thou must accomplish. Did I reveal it to thee, thou wouldst lose thy power; for to create is to overcome the morrow by the day after. Content thyself with knowing that thou, to me, art like this instrument which thou has seen; that I shall not lay it aside until its work is done." Silence. And then again the voice:

"Today thou wouldst be chosen as the lord of all builders of bridges. Never forget that the name is an idle word, an empty title. In truth there is only One who builds bridges. The rest are but stone, mortar, sand. Be content that thou art a pier of a mighty bridge."

* * * * *

Caesar started, and gazed about him. The apparition had vanished; he was sitting in the hall of Lucceius' house, and the electoral committees had gathered about him. Bassus came up to him, and his coarse features betrayed his inward emotion.

"Hail, Pontifex maximus!" he said, in hoarse tones that were full of suppressed excitement.

Caesar rose to his feet. A great peace possessed him; he felt that he was one with the universe.

He bowed his head in profound humility.

"There is only One who builds bridges." He softly repeated the words of the Unnameable.

THE HOUSE OF DANGER

They met at the door: Crassus, who was escorting his visitor, and Caesar, who was just entering. The light of the opening in the roof threw an unaccustomed shadow upon their features. It was nearing the evening of an October day.

The visitor laughed, a strangely disconsolate laugh, by which Caesar knew him.

"What, Caesar, do we meet again?"

Caesar touched the proffered hand.

"Salve, Catilina.—Salve, Crassus." The latter nodded in silence.

Catilina continued, in his usual mocking tone:

"Do you come to borrow or to repay? You must not imagine that you have an exclusive claim upon the inexhaustible coffers of this prince of all creditors: other men too desire to live!" He turned abruptly to the master of the house: "Many thanks, then, and our agreement holds good. You shall hear further from me. Farewell.—Farewell, Caesar!"

"Farewell," answered Crassus, in a tired, wheezing voice.

"Farewell!" said Caesar. Catilina nodded to both, and hastily disappeared down the narrow entry.

Caesar and Crassus proceeded side by side to the banker's workroom. Neither spoke; the guest seemed absorbed in his thoughts; the master of the house gazed wearily and indifferently into vacancy. Even when they were seated it was long before either broke the silence. Julius appeared to be examining the pattern of the carpet with the greatest interest; Licinius continued to gaze into vacancy. The silence lay between them like a desert.

At last Crassus, unable to endure it longer, raised his heavy-lidded eyes to Caesar, and said, attempting a smile:

"You are not pleased with me, Caesar?"

Caesar did not answer. With wandering eyes he followed the arabesques of the carpet; and Crassus continued: "I am doing simply what I have been accustomed to doing all my life; I am supporting an enterprise from which I hope to derive some profit." And since Caesar was still silent, he hesitatingly accented his meaning: "As I have done in your case also."

Now Julius raised his eyes. He gave the financier an enigmatic glance. He spoke only one word:

"Pompeius."

Crassus wriggled uncomfortably.

"Well, yes, I can imagine that the most recent happenings in the party have put him out of temper," he said breathing heavily. "That was not my intention; if things have been done to spite Pompeius, others, not myself, are responsible. I grant you that I have no love for Pompeius; I was not sorry to hear the innuendos levelled at the child of fortune, everybody's darling; but I am aware that we need him—"

"I have news from his headquarters," interrupted Caesar. "Pompeius is infuriated. He ascribes the whole guilt to you, and he has sworn that he will never again have any dealings with us."

The banker seemed to be chewing something.

"How unjust of Pompeius!" he said, in a complaining tone. "But I expected something of the kind. That was why I took measures in time."

Caesar looked at him inquiringly. Crassus' face lost its weariness; the taut features seemed to have filled out. With a cunning smile, he continued: "We have still some time before us: Pompeius cannot be here today nor yet tomorrow. And if on his return he is confronted by conditions which we have ordered to suit ourselves, he will have to reckon with them and adapt himself to them."

"I do not understand you," said Julius, slowly, and a little disdainfully. The crafty smile on Crassus' face grew broader.

"You know Catilina; it is not the first time he has had dealings with us; but this time it is no romantic adventure, as it was last year; but a well-considered plan. Moreover, today Catilina does not stand alone; he has influential and highly-placed personalities behind him—and what is more, an armed force which is increasing from day to day." He stopped, searching his visitor's eyes for signs of astonishment; finding none, he hastily continued: "I have said nothing of this until now because the affair was not ripe for discussion. Listen: In Etruria an army will be recruited for him by a Marian veteran. In Spain young Piso is ready for action. Yes, his connections extend even to Mauritania. And now mark this: On the twentieth is the election to the Consulate. And this time Catilina has really made adequate preparations. His success is as good as certain. But once he is elected, we shall take action on every side; in Etruria two legions will at once be under arms; in Spain Piso will guard the flanks; in Rome itself companies of gladiators will hold the few wretched police in check. No one can prevent Catilina from declaring himself Dictator, and that—since sooner or later he must join us—will mean that we shall be in power: against the Senate, against the conservatives, against Pompeius." He looked at Caesar triumphantly. But since the younger man's expression remained unaltered, he asked, almost plaintively: "You say nothing?"

Caesar hardly moved his lips.

"Because you are telling me yesterday's news."

"How so?" asked Crassus, in confusion.

"Listen to today's news," continued Caesar, disregarding the interruption. "To begin with: Piso is dead."

Crassus started. "Impossible!"

"Killed by his Spanish escort."

"That, of course, is bad," murmured the banker, rubbing his chin. "Although I am not surprised; he was a brutal fellow.—Is there anything else?"

"Marcius, who was waiting with his troops for the triumph, has been ordered to march into Etruria."

Crassus opened his eyes at this.

"What does that mean?" he asked; he was growing more uneasy.

"Cicero is acquainted with every phase of the conspiracy and is in constant receipt of reports."

Now the thunderbolt had fallen. Crassus sprang to his feet and gazed at Caesar in dismay. And Caesar continued, each word like a fresh thunderbolt:

"The election is postponed until the twenty-eighth and will take place in the presence of an armed guard. Any attempt to interrupt it will be suppressed with bloodshed."

Crassus was listening breathlessly. Now he asked, in a faltering voice:

"Where did you learn all that?"

"From Cicero," replied Caesar quietly.

The banker could hardly believe his ears.

"From Cicero?" he repeated.

"This afternoon," said Caesar, nodding, "the Consul sent for me. He was sweetness itself. He has always been so devoted to us that he felt it to be his duty to call our attention to this enterprise, which, although it was hardly to be taken seriously, might yet do us considerable harm. And if he might be permitted to give us some friendly advice, we should sever our relations with such adventurers as Catilina as quickly as possible. Of course, he must be able to count upon our secrecy, otherwise it would be impossible for him to protect us during the anticipated commotion in the Senate." He leaned back, pursing his lips together. "In plain words, that meant: You are in my hands, but I have my reasons for sparing you. If you hold your tongues I will let you be."

Crassus, who had seated himself again, was staring rigidly into vacancy. It was some time before he managed to gasp out the words:

"It's not possible! It's not possible!" He propped his el-

bows on his thighs, rested his forehead on his hands, and shook his head in despair.

"It is possible," Caesar replied. "It is even certain. Cicero shewed me Catilina's letters to Manlius in Etruria." He glanced down at the bewildered man and added, in a milder tone: "Crassus, you know that it is not my habit to reproach anyone after the event. But I beg you, I beg you most insistently, do not involve yourself in anything without previously informing me! We may be thankful that matters have turned out as they have. You do not perhaps know that it was Catilina's intention to have the consuls and the opposition candidates killed at the time of the election. Such a crazy attempt must have miscarried—to say nothing of the fact that I will not have anything to do with such criminal adventures. It is true that Rome itself has no garrison, but in Etruria there is Marcius Rex; in Apulia, Metellus; in Capua, Rufus; in Picenum, Celer—all experienced commanders at the head of tried and loyal troops. Above all, think of Pompeius, the victorious Pompeius with his enormous army, utterly devoted to him, which would like nothing better than to clear out the little mob of insurgents and press the Dictator's staff into the hand of their beloved Imperator. Be thankful that we are left a loophole for retreat! It is hard, bitterly hard that I should have to say it—but retreat we must: we have no choice."

A dull groan from Crassus. Then the banker lifted his head; and Caesar, deeply moved, averted his eyes; the colossus had been weeping.

"You are right," said the great financier, in a broken voice. "You are right, a thousand times. I was like a bull, blindly and stupidly running my head against a wall." He snatched at Caesar's hand. "You are the only man I trust. I will never again do anything without you. But help me now; tell me what is to happen!"

Caesar stood up. Crassus' eyes followed him, anxiously.

"Where are you going?"

Caesar's words came with difficulty. But they were clear

and definite, and in them might be heard his unshakeable determination to do the thing he realized to be necessary:

"I am going to Cicero. To inform him of our blind submission. To bow our necks under the yoke.—Farewell, Crassus."

THE CATASTROPHE

He had perforce to be silent. He had to look on while the cunning advocate whom patrician cowardice had pushed to the summit of the State watched and waited for his opportunity, for the day when the scandal should be great enough to make the "saving" of the fatherland a really profitable business. He knew everything; he could name the spies who kept the Consul constantly informed of what was happening; he could point them out, and yet he was obliged to keep his counsel, lest the noose which was ever tightening about the necks of the men who were blindly rushing to their destruction should close upon his own throat. The few warnings which he dared to give, despite the danger which threatened him, were laughed away by some, while others reported them immediately to the Consul, who sent him unctuous letters full of ill-concealed threats. He had to stand with tied hands, Cassandra-like, perceiving the approaching danger, yet unable to do anything to avert it, unable to guard against it.

On the 28 October all had happened as he had foretold; the election took place quietly under the armed protection of Cicero's volunteer guard, and instead of Catilina, Decimus Silanus was elected Consul for the coming year. In the morning two conspirators, immature cranks rather than unscrupulous criminals, had called on Cicero, but he had refused to see them; he did not have them arrested, yet he saw to it that a rumor was spread to the effect that a murderous attempt had been made on his, the Consul's, sacred life. His ever-watchful gaze followed the doings of Catilina's emissaries in the provinces; Manlius in Etruria, Septimius in Picenum, Julius in Apulia; the inflammatory letter which the

senator Saenius read in the Curia was his work; in Faesulae there was an insurrection; and at his instance rewards were offered to informers; everyone who gave information regarding the conspiracy was to be rewarded; the slave with freedom and a hundred sesterces, the freeman with immunity and two hundred sesterces; and it was he who was responsible for the rumours that were flying about Rome: the conspirators intended to set fire to the city at a dozen points simultaneously, and subject the inhabitants to a terrible massacre.

And still he hesitated. Only once he exploded: when Catilina himself, in order to defy him, dared to venture into the Senate itself. On that occasion he made a speech whose powerful construction, overpowering climax, irresistible tempo and iron logic even Caesar, who heard it shuddering as with fever, could not refrain from admiring. The benches round Catilina were hastily deserted, and his reply was drowned by the angry shouts of the senators. Then he leapt out at them: "None but enemies all around me, hunting me to destruction? Then I will quench the fire that consumes me in the wreckage of Rome!"

They watched him rush from the Senate, and before the impression of the moment had faded Cicero obtained what he had intended to obtain by his great scene: the senatus consultus "Videant consules," which at last gave him a free hand.

But still he waited. He had torn off the head of the conspiracy: Catilina was driven from Rome; he had gone to Manlius in Etruria. But the others, feebly led by Lentulus, in the meanwhile were not yet sufficiently compromised to give his fame the dazzling radiance he desired. The Romans were growing impatient; there was no sign of the fires and massacres which had been foretold; and even the reported revolt in Faesulae seemed to have flickered out. The fame he hoped for threatened to escape him—if indeed it did not turn to ridicule.

Then the conspirators themselves pressed the weapon into his hand.

The deputation of the Allobroges, a recently subjected Gaulish tribe, who had already had experience of the unscrupulous methods of the Roman tax-farmers, had come to Rome in order to protest against their ill usage, and to beg that the abuses of which they complained should be abolished. They found no hearers; the aristocratic gang had no intention of interfering with officials of their own class. In their bewilderment the helpless provincials looked about them for a helping hand.

They found it among the conspirators.

A certain Umbrenus, the proprietor of an export business trading with Gaul, approached them and offered them a mutual alliance. They accepted with delight; there was nothing that they were not ready to promise. They were then initiated into the aims and intentions of the conspiracy; they were requested to go home and instigate risings in Gaul which would prevent the recall of the military forces of the Republic. Subsequently they began to feel dubious in respect of the treaty which they had concluded. They felt that there was something wrong about it; they came to the conclusion, moreover, that they could improve their position with much more certainty by doing a service to the official Rome; and finally they decided to tell the whole story to one of the few Romans who had shown himself willing to listen to them: the senator Quintus Fabius Sanga; and this they did, with many cautious queries: such as "What would happen, in case . . ." and "How would it be if this were done?" Half an hour later the Consul had heard the story.

He realized instantly that here was the opportunity for his great stroke. Alliance with foreign nations to the injury of the Republic! He sent for the Gauls in secret, praised their zeal, overwhelmed them with indefinite promises, dazzled them with the most enticing prospects—and finally gave them his instructions. They must pretend to acquiesce in the plans of the conspirators, and eventually induce the latter to take decisive steps. An ugly trick, and morally no more respectable than the action of the conspirators them-

selves; the first official of the Republic made use of a half-savage people in order to deliver Roman citizens to their death.

The conspirators walked into the trap; at the request of the Allobroges the treaty was put into writing: Lentulus, Cethegus and Statilius signed and sealed it. Only Cassius Longinus, scenting mischief, made some shuffling excuse, and hastened to leave Rome to seek out Catilina.

Now the net was drawn tight. The deputies left Rome by night, apparently in all secrecy, in order to return to Gaul. Titus Volturcius accompanied them; first of all they were to go to Catilina, in order to secure his confirmation of the alliance. But at the Mulvian bridge the praetor Valerius Flaccus was waiting for them, and Pomptinus, with a body of troops. The travellers were surrounded. The Allobroges, in accordance with their instructions, surrendered immediately; Volturcius attempted to resist, but when he saw himself forsaken by all the rest he too surrendered. Cicero's trick was successful.

His manner of dealing with the conspirators exceeded in pomposity even the great scene of his denunciation of Catilina. On the very night of their arrest an extraordinary session of the Senate was convened; the Consul himself brought Lentulus into the Senate; the other prisoners followed, flanked by the glittering axes and the bound fasces of the lictors. The drama was acted by torchlight: the Gaulish deputies told willingly all they knew—and even more; Volturcius, in the face of the evidence, made a faltering confession; Lentulus and the others had to admit the authenticity of seals and signatures. The Senate decided to remand the accused in custody; their fate should be decided on the following day.

Caesar was desperate. He could never have imagined that Cicero would go to such lengths in order to gratify his vanity; otherwise he would have spoken—despite all that he had at stake. Now he felt almost equally guilty of what had occurred. He looked with horror on the pale faces of the prisoners. While the others kept their countenance, the child-

like face of young Statilius—he was no more than a boy—was distorted as though he were about to burst into tears. As though begging for mercy, his terrified, staring eyes followed every expression of the hard, secretive faces of the senators—many of whom were guiltless of the conspiracy only because they lacked the courage to conspire. The foolish youth had not even suspected what was really afoot. He deserved punishment, of course; but this was inhuman.

A brooding fury took possession of Caesar's soul. Once again the wealthy rulers of Rome would proceed to extremities; once again they would believe that they had stifled the popular ferment by warning examples. They would go home bursting with moral satisfaction, and return to their sordid affairs. Never yet had it been so clear to his inmost mind that this Republic had lost all justification for its existence; that only a single hand, a hand at once clean and powerful, could bring the ship of State, leaking at every seam, in safety through the stormy waters into which it had been driven by malignity, incomprehension and corruption.

The sound of Cicero's smooth, oily voice made him feel physically sick. His heart was torn by remorse and self-reproach. He knew that he would never be able to forgive himself for his silence; that henceforth it would lie like a dark shadow over his life.

The prisoners were distributed: for that one night they were to be guarded by reputable citizens. Reluctantly they came forward one by one: Lentulus Spinther took charge of his cousin Lentulus Sura, Cornificus of Cethegus, Crassus, whose fat face, despite the red gleam of the torches, was deathly pale, of Capito, and Terentius of Caeparius. Then Caesar stepped forward, and as though in protection laid his arm about the slender boyish shoulders of young Statilius.

VAE VICTIS!

Bell. Cat. 51, 52.

DEATH!—Death!—Death! That was the verdict: vote by vote, man by man. From Silanus (the Consul for the coming

year) to the last aristocratic numskull who had never yet spoken in the Senate save to say "Yes!" or "No!" all voted for the execution of Publius Lentulus Sura, Caius Cethegus, and the rest. A common thirst for blood had possessed the Senate; it had gone to the heads of even the most peaceable men like strong drink, robbing them of the power of reflection. And the originator of this red orgy, the Consul Marcus Tullius Cicero, the man of the day, because the man of the situation, stood by with unctuous mien and enjoyed his triumph.

Caesar, sick with contempt, glanced along the benches. Yesterday and the day before yesterday they had still been trembling with fear. For that they meant to revenge themselves today. They could not find words harsh enough to stigmatize the crime of "betrayal of the fatherland," and to invoke all the curses of gods and men on the unhappy, defenceless little company delivered to their wrath. If the conspiracy had succeeded, if Catilina had been victorious, they could not have bowed their heads low enough to greet the new ruler—just as they had greeted Sulla.

Now Volcatius Tullus voted; now Catulus; now Fabius Sanga, the man responsible for the great coup . . . Sour glances were cast on Caesar; it was known that he had had relations with Catilina; and even if the attempt to incriminate him had failed, what was known and what was whispered could be served up as malignant rumours which could not be proved or disproved.

He bit his lips in silence. Had the trial of Rabirius been entirely futile? Was the lesson then taught thrown away? Had they—who had hardly recovered from the blow—already forgotten the warning, that they were now sentencing men to death as though they possessed plenary powers, without recking of the people, who, in accordance with law and justice, had the right to speak the last word? Were these men quite hopelessly stupid? Let them beware, lest after Catilina another and a stronger man should come, tearing up and destroying whatever stood in his way!

"Caius Caesar has the ear of the Senate!"

What, already?—Even as he rose to his feet he swiftly reviewed the main ideas of his speech. He must be cautious. Stinging rebukes and threats would not improve the position of the delinquents, and would only make his own worse. He must speak mildly; he must flatter when he would fain have thundered. Perhaps after all he would be able to avert the worst.

Absolute silence greeted his rising. It was plain that all were waiting with tense curiosity to hear what he had to say. He took one last glance round the assembly, and began:

"Noble House!

"The decision of difficult questions demands a complete detachment from all feelings of sympathy and aversion of revenge and indulgence. All these feelings do but hinder the perception of the just decision, for it is impossible at one and the same time to give way to passion and to decide what is profitable. The intelligence alone must rule; when passion takes possession of any cause it stifles all lucid thought.

"I might, noble House, adduce a great number of cases in which the harshness or indulgence of kings, or of whole nations, has wrought disaster; but I prefer to point to the manner in which our forefathers acted: justly, free from passion, and after full consideration. In our wars with Perseus, the king of Macedonia, the great and flourishing community of Rhodes, which owed its prosperity to our favour, treacherously took the part of the enemy. But when the war was ended, and our forefathers deliberated over the fate of Rhodes, they let it go unpunished, in order that they should not incur the reproach that they had waged the war to enrich themselves rather than for the sake of offended justice. In like manner, in all the Punic wars, despite all the breaches of peace and of armistice on the part of the Carthaginians, they never took the opportunity of repaying like with like; Rome's dignity was to them more important than all contingencies and legal justifications. And in this matter now before us, noble House, all must take heed lest the crime of

Lentulus and his fellows be set above the dignity of the Republic, and that the verdict be pronounced in the name of the Republic and not in any spirit of private vengeance. If this had been merely a theoretical discussion of a punishment befitting the crime, I too should have agreed with the unusual proposals which have been made; but the magnitude of the crime excludes any such discussion; therefore we must, of course, confine ourselves to the means prescribed by the law."

Had anyone noted the irony of the last sentence? He glanced quickly at the faces of the senators. They sat silent and attentive, and nothing was to be gathered from their inexpressive faces. He continued:

"Most of the speakers who preceded me have in impressive language deplored the fate of Rome, and described the cruelty of war, and the lot of the conquered; youths and maidens were carried off, babes at the breast were torn from the arms of their mothers, women were violated by the conquerors, sacred shrines and private houses were plundered; men were invited to murder and incendiarism—until all ended in a chaos of weapons and corpses, blood and lamentation. But in heaven's name, what is the use of these descriptions? Will men, forsooth, be impressed by them if the horror of the actual things does not possess them?

"Nay, noble House; to no man who suffers wrong does wrong appear a little thing; but many make more of their wrong than they need. Only in its effects is a difference manifest: since but a few men hear of the angry deeds of a poor, unknown, insignificant proletarian; whereas the actions of those in an exalted station draw upon themselves the attention of all. Those, then, who stand in the focus of the general regard should be of all men most circumspect. In such a position passion and hatred are unfitting, and most of all revenge. What in a private person is excused as the effect of passion may easily be regarded as excess of cruelty in a government. The crime, it is true, was monstrous: but the majority of men think only of the last happening, and in their

criticism of a somewhat severe judgment they forget the crime that lies behind it."

There was a sound of whispering. Certain of the senators had put their heads together and were nodding significantly to one another. Cicero's expression betrayed his unconcealed disappointment, and only Cato gazed stupidly into vacancy, shaking his shaggy red head.—Well, now it was time to use heavier weapons.

"I am well acquainted of the constancy and integrity of Decimus Silanus, and I know that for this most estimable and upright man personal affections and aversions do not exist, but only the interests of the State. Nevertheless, it seems to me that his verdict is—not cruel indeed, for what could be regarded as cruel in respect of this crime?—but contrary to the interest of the State. Truly, Silanus, one might think that fear or a defective knowledge of the law may have induced you to approve of this uncustomary procedure. There can, of course, be no talk of fear, in view of the overwhelming measures of security taken by our most estimable Consul"—the words flew like arrows, and his gaze smote the pallid face of the Consul like a sword. "And concerning the punishment of death, I will not pretend that it is other than it really is: to the miserable and the oppressed death is no injury, but a release from all troubles. It is an end of all human misery, for in death is neither joy nor sorrow. But, in heaven's name, why did you not also propose a public scourging?" The senators stared. And now, quickly, the final thrust, with his eyes on Cicero's face: "*Because the Lex Porcia forbids it?*" Now, as he delivered his assault, his words followed one another like the waves of a torrent. "But other laws substitute banishment in the place of the capital punishment of a citizen! Or is it because scourging would be a severer punishment than execution? But you yourself said: What is too harsh and terrible for such offenders? Or because it is a milder punishment? *Why respect the law in the lesser instance when it is broken in a greater?*"

The Senate was in tumult. Most of the senators had leaped to their feet, wildly gesticulating and shouting at one another. Silanus was wiping the great drops of perspiration from his fat, good-natured face. And above all the clamor rose the clear, pealing voice:

"But who will blame this treatment of the betrayers of their fatherland? Time—the morrow—the changing destiny that rules the moods of nations. Beyond a question the offenders deserve their fate; but bethink you that your verdict affects others. All bad examples, noble House, have their origin in respectable actions. The government has only to pass at some time into the hands of less wise or honorable men, and this example, set by worthy and capable rulers, will serve as a pattern for the unworthy and incapable." With difficulty he suppressed the flood of scornful words that rose to his lips, and took refuge in deliberate rhetoric: "After the conquest of Athens the Lacedaemonians set up there a government of thirty. These thirty men entered upon their office with the execution without trial of all bad and generally hated individuals. There was great rejoicing among the people, and only one opinion: that these persons had been rightly served. But later, when their power was established, they set up a general reign of terror, killing good and bad indiscriminately, and the enslaved people had reason to repent of their senseless rejoicing. Or here is an example from our own time: Who did not approve of the action of Sulla"—the dreaded name was spoken, and the hearers felt as though an electric shock had passed through their bodies—"when he had Damasippus and other offenders executed? And yet that was the beginning of a terrible slaughter; if one man coveted the house and estate, and finally even the clothes or the valuables of another, he had his name entered on the list of the proscribed. Not long after the execution of Damasippus the sword smote all who had rejoiced in his death, and there was no end to the murders until Sulla had stuffed all his creatures to the teeth with riches. I have no intention of instituting any comparison with Marcus Tullius or the case before us;

but in a great State there are all sorts and conditions of people. Imagine another such contingency, and another Consul, who likewise has an army behind him—a false rumour, and a resolution of the Senate presses the sword into his hand—and who will seize his arm and prevent him from using it? Our forefathers, noble House, were wanting neither in courage nor in reflection, nor did they lack imagination in the imitation of serviceable foreign devices; our weapons are largely of Samnite, and our insignia of office of Etruscan origin. Every practical innovation of friend or foe was eagerly tested and applied, for we rightly considered that a good thing should not be fruitlessly envied, but imitated. But at the same time, after the example of the Greeks, the scourging and expulsion and execution of citizens were introduced, and this, in the further development of the Republic, led to deplorable errors of justice. Accordingly, with other statutes, the Lex Porcia was enacted, which gave the condemned a possibility of pardon. I do not believe, noble House, that in the case now before us we should depart from this law. Do we seek to be wiser than those who built up this gigantic State from small beginnings, we who are scarcely capable of maintaining this stupendous organization?

"Then, some will ask me, are these men to be released, to swell Catilina's army? By no means. I propose the confiscation of their property, and their confinement in the prisons of the great cities, as a penal measure against any attempt at a repetition of their proceedings."

A minute's pause; then a clapping of hands; timid at first, but quickly increasing to a storm of applause. The senators gathered into groups; lively debates arose, and the majority seemed to be in favor of the milder procedure. From one group Terracinius emerged. He was standing on his seat, waving his tablets, and shouting incessantly at the throng surrounding him: "The Lex Porcia! The Lex Porcia!" Silanus waddled slowly up to Caesar on his pillar-like legs, gazed at him with troubled eyes, crushed his hand, and assured him

over and over again that he hadn't thought of the matter like that, and he regretted his precipitate attitude.

Saved, thought Caesar. Saved. A comfortable warmth filled his bosom.

Then Cato rose to his feet. His fanatical eyes were burning; he was shrieking words that were unintelligible in the general confusion. But the Senate grew quieter, and quieter still, and now there was a deathly silence.

"I am absolutely of another opinion, noble House," he cried, his shrill voice cutting the vibrating air, "when I look at the danger that is threatening us. And I am not alone in my conviction that the punishment of the offenders against the altars of the home and the family hearth is thoroughly well considered. This is not a matter for prolonged reflection, but a question of self-defence. Any other crime is ended when it is committed; but this can with difficulty be avenged if that should happen which we must indeed prevent: for who would still be a judge if Rome were captured? Therefore I appeal in Heaven's name to you whose houses and lands and treasures of art and ledgers are of more importance than the State. If you wish to safeguard your possessions, whatever they may be, if you wish to continue your comfortable lives undisturbed, then beware: for all is at stake! We are not threatened with imposts or the loss of allies: our lives, our liberty are at stake! How often, noble House, and how earnestly have I reproached my fellow-citizens for their luxury and avarice; how many enemies have I made thereby! Having myself no needs, I had no understanding for the vices of others. But you could treat my reproaches lightly, for the State stood firm, and superfluity excused misuse. But now we are considering not morality and immorality, nor yet the greatness and power of Rome, but, however one looks at the matter, the question whether the future shall belong to us or to our enemies."

Silence. The faces of the listeners were pale; all eyes were on the speaker's lips; he had them in his power. Bitterly Caesar gritted his teeth; the sacred money-bags would decide.

"Moderation? Mercy? But we have long ago forgotten the true meaning of the words! The scattering of foreign gold is called liberality, and vile actions pass for courage. And so the Republic finds itself in its present situation. Our morality tolerates the open-handed spoilers of allied peoples; the merciless thieves of public property, will you let them shed our blood as well, and destroy all reputable men in order to spare a few criminals? Caius Caesar, who apparently does not believe in a life after death, and who therefore does not believe that the criminal, being dead, is punished by banishment to savage, wild and horrible places, far removed from the good, has spoken very finely and impressively of being and not-being. He proposes confiscation of the property of the offenders, and their imprisonment in various communes, apparently because he fears that here in Rome they might be liberated by the conspirators of the popular party, or by a paid mob. As though there were not criminal elements in all parts of Italy, and as though audacity must be powerless in the provinces, where defence is more difficult! No, no! Either he is really afraid, and then his proposal is worthless, or he alone of all men is without fear; but that for me is yet another reason to fear for you and for myself!"

This was more than plain speaking! The poisonous glances which Caesar had so often encountered during the last few days and hours, and which had quickly sought his face on Cato's malicious allusion to the atheism of the highest priestly official of the Republic, were now concentrated upon him. He behaved as though he did not notice them, maintaining his quiet, attentive bearing, although a hell was raging within him. All is lost, he thought. All is lost.

"Do not forget one thing!" cried Cato. "Your judgment of Publius Lentulus and his companions is at the same time a judgment of Catilina, and his army, and all other conspirators! The least hesitation, and their audacity will exceed all measure! Act firmly, and their spirit will be broken!

"It was not by the force of arms that our forefathers made the Republic so great. If it had been so, we indeed

should be in a glorious position, since we have more citizens and allies, more weapons and horses than they. No, it was something else, something that we no longer value, that founded the greatness of Rome: frugality, industry and justice, and a free spirit, unsubdued by any criminal propensity of passion. These we have replaced by luxury and avarice, by dearth among the people and superfluity among the few; our ideal it that of wealth, our aim is idleness. There is no longer any difference between good and evil, and the reward of honest labour is pocketed by the unscrupulous. Each of you sees no further than his beloved person; at home he thinks only of pleasure, and here only of money, or profitable connections. No wonder that criminal hands dare to snatch at the ill-administered wealth of the State!"

A scornful laugh parted his lips in a savage, animal grimace.

"But there is one thing that I am quite forgetting: these were citizens of our foremost families who conspired to give their native city to the flames, who fanned the hatred of a Gaulish tribe, and incited them to make war upon us. The enemy leader and his army are threatening the Republic. And you are still asking what you should do with those of his fellows whom you have seized within the city? Why, of course, wink at the matter; these are unripe youths who have been led astray by ambition; and send them away, well armed, so that they shall not lose by your consideration and clemency should they wish to take up arms against you. It is, of course, a serious position, but there is nothing to fear." The scornful laugh rang through the Senate; the shrieking voice was sibilant with naked hatred. "What, you look at one another doubtingly in your weakness and irresolution, and you trust in Heaven, which has so often saved the Republic in moments of danger! No! Vows and womanish prayers will not bring the gods to your aid! Watchfulness, energy and reflection—these are the secret of success. The indolent sluggard prays in vain to the heavenly powers; they remain hostile and aloof."

He bowed his head, staring into vacancy, raised it again, glancing quickly at Caesar, and continued:

"In the time of our forefathers Aulus Manlius Torquatus, the supreme commander against the Gauls, executed his own son, because the latter had disobeyed orders in engaging the enemy. So grievously did this excellent young man atone for his unruly valour. And you still hesitate in your judgment of these monstrous traitors? Of course: their crime offers such a contrast to their previous life. Grant Lentulus, therefore, the same regard that he has always shown for modesty and reputation, for gods and man; let consideration be shown to Cethegus the first time he turns his sword against his house! And Statillus, Capito, Caeparius? If they had ever had any respect for anything they would never have entered into this conspiracy.

"I will make haste to conclude. If there be still any who are tender of the crime, and cannot be persuaded by words, let them consider the situation: we are surrounded. Catilina's sword is at our throat; his accomplices lie in ambush in the city, in the heart of Rome; no measures can be taken, nothing can be decided in secret; the greatest haste is necessary."

He drew himself up and wrapped himself closely in the folds of his toga. His fleshless face had now something really impressive and compelling about it.

"I propose: That since through the actions of degenerate citizens the State has been placed in a position of the greatest peril, and since they are convicted, by the evidence of Titus Volturcius and the Allobrogian envoys, of having devised murder and incendiarism and other inhuman crimes against the State and the citizens, the prisoners shall be executed as guilty of capital crimes."

A burst of tempestuous applause. All was over.

Slowly Caesar rose to his feet. He was infinitely weary. A stale, bitter taste was in his mouth; as after a riotous night. With heavy steps he left the Curia.

Behind him, as he retreated, the voting was proceeding: Death!—Death!—Death! . . .

THE GUEST FROM THE OTHER WORLD

Caesar, having taken his leave of his hosts, was returning on foot, unaccompanied by a single servant, to his official residence in the pontifical palace. He filled his lungs with the cold, clear air of the December night, turning his hot face to the icy breeze that swept through the streets of Rome. The cold touch of it comforted him, caressing his throbbing temples and dispelling his oppressive thoughts. For a few minutes he could forget that the Senate was supreme; that, precisely as he had foreseen, the sword of Rome had been drawn not merely to suppress the revolt, but in order to crush the whole popular movement. And the Romans did not realize that after the revolt, as before, they were in the power of Cicero, the ambitious climber, whose word was enough to make a speedy end of anyone who displeased him.

But on reaching a dark, narrow street in the neighborhood of the palace Caesar noticed that the breeze had ceased to blow, and that his face, which was barely cooled, was beginning to burn again. Something else he noticed also: that on the other side of the lane, and abreast of him, a man was walking who was evidently only awaiting a favorable opportunity for approaching him. And he remembered that he had subconsciously noted the hasty, ringing steps behind him for a long while past—almost since he left the house of his host on the Aventine.

Now the man was preparing to cross the street. Caesar tightened his muscles and peered through the darkness. It had suddenly occurred to him that this might be a hired bravo whom one of his enemies had set upon him—Cicero, who, to avoid scandal, had decided to remove him in this way, or Catulus, who since his election to the pontificate had pursued him with a burning hatred, and now, having failed to smuggle him into the ranks of the conspirators, thought to avenge himself in this manner. Slowly Caesar felt in the folds of his toga, and unobtrusively grasped the hilt of the dagger which he carried in the circle of his tunic.

The unknown man had crossed the street, and now he stood in Caesar's way. His cloak was drawn over his head, hiding his face, of which only two smouldering eyes were visible. Caesar tightened his grip on the hilt of his dagger, and halted. "Two words, Caesar," said the phantom, in a voice that seemed strangely familiar to Julius.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The man hesitated and looked about him. They were standing in front of the closed door of a butcher's shop, and a little light was shining through the chinks of the door. The swathed figure stepped close to Caesar, and for a moment the cloak was drawn aside from the face. Caesar stared as though he had seen a ghost.

"You—in Rome?" he said at length.

The other laughed—a hoarse, disconsolate laugh.

"Don't you want to earn the informer's reward? You would be the first to make money out of me." The mockery faded from his voice. "Can I speak to you?" he asked briefly.

Caesar nodded, and moved on again.

"Come with me."

The other gave him a sidelong glance of astonishment.

"You don't even hesitate? With all respect to you—you are, after all, a man!"

They were silent until they reached the little door of the garden. Hastily Caesar opened it, admitted his late guest, and drew the door to behind him. Unobserved they reached the house. They did not speak again until they were in Caesar's work-room.

The master of the house saw to it that they should not be disturbed. Only one grey-headed slave attended on them—the same who had brought the young man the news of his father's death more than twenty years ago—serving them with food and wine and fruits, and silently disappearing.

"You give me even bread and salt," said the guest; "you give them to me, the proscript. That I shall never forget.—I ought to have known you sooner," he added, with a sigh.

"You know what has happened in your absence?" said Caesar, changing the subject.

"I know," the other nodded. "I too have my spies—like Cicero. They have told me how warmly you intervened in favour of my friends. You have more than repaid the trifling service I once did you."

"Unfortunately," said Caesar, "it was useless. They came very near putting me to death with the rest."

"I know," repeated the guest, turning away. "I know everything. I know that after your speech they threatened you outside, in front of the Curia, with their toy swords, and that Cicero himself—what magnanimity!—threw himself in front of you to protect you."

"I have not been to the Senate since then," interjected Caesar. "I will teach them what it means to threaten the life of a Roman citizen."

"I was there too," continued the guest, disregarding Caesar's interruption, "when my friends were taken to the cells of the common criminals; I was there when Cicero came out and said 'Their lives are ended!' He was never nearer the end of his own life than at that moment; I had the dagger already in my hand. But I let him go; what was the use? The others would have been left—the whole great patrician Senate. Cicero is merely their man of straw—despite his apparent omnipotence."

"What do you propose to do now?"

"It is all up with me," said the other, quietly. "I have no illusions left on that point. I shall try, of course, to fight my way through to Gaul with my people, but it will not be possible; Metellus Celer is barring the Alpine passes with three legions, and from the south here the Senate's troops are moving against me. So the hounds will catch the wolf between them and tear him to pieces." He gazed sadly at the floor, then raised his head. "But I did not come here to deplore my fate," he said, steadily. "I have things of greater importance to discuss with you. What I intended has gone amiss; rightly, it may be; my ideas did not go deep enough. I wanted to set

myself at the head of the petrified Senate, without knowing what I should do with the State if I won to power. You do know, Caesar. You are the only man in Rome who is capable of making something of the old empire. All the others are thinking only of themselves; you only think of the cause. And so I bequeath to you as my heir all that is good and vital in my intentions." His eyes, which Caesar had never seen other than veiled with melancholy or restlessly glittering, were now large and radiant. His face had recovered the beauty which it possessed before his wild, disorderly life had ravaged and wasted it. There was power, there was something like genius in his features, and Caesar suddenly understood why this man of all men had been able to attract so many fanatical adherents.

"I called Cicero a puppet," continued his guest. "The others are little men. Cato is a madman; with his ancient Roman imbecilities he will never understand that our time needs other forms of life; Crassus thinks only of his money and his ambition; for that matter, you have already mastered him; and to come to Pompeius, he is a procrastinator, who will never dare to take the last, decisive steps. And you alone remain."

"And I am powerless," interrupted Caesar, bitterly, "for Cicero knows that I was in alliance with you, and that is enough to despatch me whenever it pleases him."

"That is just why I have come to you," said his guest. "You cannot parry his weapon unless you have one of your own. And that I will give you." He felt inside his garments, and drew forth a small, thin packet. "I had once a lawsuit on my hands, on behalf of my province," he said. "At that time, as everyone knows, Cicero offered me his services as advocate. But what no one knows is—this." He opened the wrapper of the packet, searched among the documents which it contained, and handed Caesar one of them. "In this letter Cicero proposes to take common political action with me against the Senate. Read this through, and you will see how completely it compromises him." He laughed shortly. "The Consul as

the friend of the traitor and conspirator!—I am giving you this. Let Cicero know that it is in your hands, and you will see how pliant and humble he will be. And then you will be free again, and can act as you please." He stood up. "And so, even if I am no longer in existence, I can break the necks of the senatorial rabble!" For a moment his features were distorted; then they recovered their expression of smooth composure. "Farewell, Caesar," he said briefly. "All good fortune attend you—and when you are victorious, do not quite forget me.—No, let be, I can find my way alone. Farewell!"

THE TWELFTH HOUR

They met in Crassus' house, and the situation was not unlike that which existed when the quaestor Caius Caesar won his first victory over the lesser idols of the party and climbed, beside Crassus, to the foremost rank of the party leaders. Once more they were met together: the same men, apart from a few supernumeraries, who had formerly fought one another so furiously: Caesar, Crassus, Manilius, Gabinius. Only Capito was lacking: he had allowed himself to become involved in Catilina's adventure, and was one of the five who had been strangled by the executioner on the memorable fifth of December.

They were the same men—but the centre of gravity had shifted. The expression of their faces showed that something significant was happening, destroying the plans of some and favouring those of the others. Caesar sat silent in his chair, with an immovable expression on his face; silently he listened to the exchange of speeches, apparently without interest in them. Crassus seemed absorbed in his own thoughts; a strange, sickly pallor had crept over his fat cheeks, and his eyes, nervous and restless, roamed quickly about the bare, unfurnished room. He had had all his artistic treasures and his valuables packed; some of them had been removed to secret depositories, and some had been sent on board the swift Massiliot sailing-ship which waited for him in the harbor of Ostia. Manilius was greatly elated, and his green eyes were

full of unconcealed delight in the discomfiture of his enemies as they considered the two defeated and powerless leaders. And facing the three, stiff and erect, sat Gabinius. The life of a campaigner had tanned his skin, hardened his muscles, and given assurance to his voice and his glance. As he sat there he was no longer a small cogwheel of a complex machine, moving only by leave of the great flywheel, but the free and authoritative ambassador of a mighty ruler, making, in the name of his young lord, preparations which might not be countermanded, giving orders which required instant obedience, and distributing praise and blame which were accepted with humility.

"Manilius," he said, turning to the old people's tribune, "you will do well to report to Pompeius immediately upon his landing: the Imperator has not forgotten your loyal service, and is willing to do something for you." The man addressed bowed with a submissive smile, betraying, by glance and bearing, his complete readiness to become a creature of the victor of Pontus. Gabinius passed on to Crassus. "What is to be done with you," he said, arrogantly—and when had anyone dared to employ such a tone to Licinius!—"I do not yet know. The Imperator is profoundly angered by the manner in which you have acted." Crassus' cheeks took on a still waxier pallor; and the head on the great bullneck sank as though crushed on to the broad chest. Pitilessly the envoy continued:

"We are ignorant neither of your attempts to institute the dictatorship with the aid of Catilina, nor of your efforts to overthrow the Imperator by the proposal of Rullus. The Imperator will reserve to himself the decision as to your fate. It may be—" and the words fell one by one like drops of poison—"that he will pardon you if you kneel to him." The fat white cheeks quivered helplessly. Gabinius turned his cold, snake-like gaze upon Caesar. "As to you, at all events, we are in no sort of doubt. Crassus at least has never made any secret of his enmity, but you, from the very first, having been playing a double game all this year, you were friendly

to Pompeius' face, and you incited men against him behind his back; you tried to make use of him and at the same time to overthrow him; and every blow which you caused to be struck at him—for you were too cunning to strike yourself —was followed by the act of a seeming friend. We know today what to think of you, and if Pompeius should still hesitate to crush you I myself will see that it is done. At best we shall leave you in your stolen pontificate, on the condition, of course, that your political activities are at an end. For that matter," he added, with a complacent smile, "there will be no more opportunities for such activities. Do you remember, Licinius? Dictatorship is the final goal of democracy! But you did not imagine it would come like this!"

On the table beside Caesar's chair a bronze lamp was burning. For a moment Caesar's eyes fell upon it, and he considered whether he should not dash the thing in the speaker's face. When he raised his eyes again he was once more composed and self-controlled. He gazed past his babbling companions as though they had not been there.

It was all over; there could be no doubt of that. What he had seen approaching all the time, the thing that for three whole years had been rising like a threatening spectre in the way of all his plans, was now at hand; like Sulla years ago, so Pompeius today was on the point of landing in Italy with his victorious army, and giving the State such laws as he chose to give. Moreover, his position was incomparably more favorable than Sulla's had been; for Sulla found the country in revolt, and had first of all to defeat a hostile power; but who would or could hinder Pompeius when he marched from Brundisium to Rome at the head of his troops, and bound the white fillet of the Dictator about his brows?

Outwardly he was calm and unmoved, but within him a storm was raging. Three years, three precious years had been wasted! A space of time that would have sufficed to concentrate his power, organize the resources of the country, and create an army which would have met the victor of today on equal terms. And in these three years what had happened?

He had wasted them, squandered them on petty squabbles and fantastic schemes—and now today he stood there empty-handed, defenceless against the despotic will of the strong man.

Gabinius was still talking, vain as a peacock, developing his ideas; sensible and concise, his own and other men's—it was unbearable. Why should he listen to his babbling any longer? Why sit there and let this inflated nobody exult in his imaginary power? Let him get away somewhere, anywhere, where there was quiet, and the eye and ear need not be forced to endure the senseless importunity of the new despotism!

A servant entered, and stood in the doorway, confused and hesitating.

Licinius raised his lack-lustre eyes.

"What is it?"

"A message for Caius Caesar."

Caesar rose, thanking the fate that saved him from further torment. He followed the slave, who had left the room. Behind the thick folds of the curtain Gabinius' endless flow of words sank to a vague, monotonous murmur.

* * * * *

Half a minute later the curtain was flung aside again. Gabinius interrupted himself in the middle of a sentence; all looked up. Caesar stood in the doorway; he was trembling from head to foot, and white to the very lips, but his eyes were flashing fire.

For a moment there was a silence so terribly oppressive that every man in the room felt as though he must shriek aloud, simply to put an end to it—if only he had the power to do so.

Then the voice spoke from the doorway, choking, barely intelligible; and yet its words were a battering-ram that overturned everything at a single blow:

"Pompeius has landed at Brundisium. He has disbanded his army!"

BOOK THE SECOND.

CAESAR.

THE MAN BY THE DOOR

SILENTLY the man who entered had closed the door behind him. He stood in the twilight of the colonnade and gazed fixedly down into the semicircle of the amphitheatre at his feet, now closely thronged with solemn figures in flowing togas. All these togas bore the broad purple stripe; all the faces visible revealed the same arrogant, self-conscious expression; the Curia, the ruler of the world, was sitting.

A stranger might have regarded the scene with shuddering reverence; but not the man at the door; he saw through the solemn expressions, the dignified gestures, into the empty heads and hollow hearts. His gaze penetrated them as though they had been transparent glass; it realized everything as though it had entered into the hearts and heads of those over whom it passed.

The great days of the Senate seemed to have returned, and the senators felt themselves again; unchecked and undisturbed by the opposition which had of late years been more and more effective, it pursued its traditional party policies as in the good old autocratic days, saw to it that its own interests did not suffer, and rejoiced in its recovered power, which it was firmly resolved never again to relinquish.

There were three men who had threatened this delectable state of affairs, and all three were now disabled: Pompeius the Great, Pompeius Magnus, whose empty outward magnificence one conceded with an indulgent smile, for since he had no army, and no political adherents, and was at enmity with Crassus, he had little to say in the government; Crassus himself, who in view of the miscarriage of his various enterprises seemed to have lost all desire to play an active part; and Caesar, who after his year of office as praetor had been sent out of the way into the Spanish province, and left there

to fight the barbarians. It was undeniably true that he had been successful; he had even led the Roman armies as far as the northern coast; nevertheless . . .

But it was precisely this fact which had afforded the senators the opportunity of a masterpiece of diplomacy; one of which its originators were justly proud. Caesar, having fought a successful campaign, had asserted his claim to a triumph to celebrate his victories. At first the senators were wrathful, and determined to meet his request with a flat refusal; but suddenly they reversed their attitude; his wishes were met with conspicuous readiness, and the triumph was granted. For in accordance with an ancient and sacred custom the *triumphator* could not enter the city before his triumph; and Caesar intended at the same time to become a candidate for the Consulate. He had asked that he might be dispensed from the necessity of soliciting the votes of the electors in person, but his request was refused, courteously but definitely; custom and the law, he was told, made it inadmissible; so there was nothing for it but to postpone the triumph until after the election—and so they had disposed of this uncomfortable fellow, the only man who might still be dangerous to the highly conservative patrician party.

And so the noble and oligarchic ruling families, the Metelli, the Fabii, the Cornelii, together with their plebeian bully Cicero, looked forward to the future with gratification. Their gaze travelled comfortably over the bare, lofty hall of the Senate, noting the isolation of Pompeius, who sat alone, gloomy and helpless, and the depression of Crassus, who never lifted his lustreless eyes from the floor. And to complete the idyll, Cato, the republican nightingale, was singing one of his hymns to the greatness and simplicity of ancient Rome, leaving them free to dream pleasantly of profitable governorships and fat State sinecures.

The man at the door of the Senate had absorbed the picture to its last detail. Now, it seemed to him, it was time to spoil it. He emerged from the shadow of the colonnade, and began slowly to descend the steps. A few senators looked

round, and presently more followed their example; they beheld the slender figure, the narrow, clean-cut face, whose courteous expression was tinged with a trace of mockery, and recognized the last man they expected to see that day: Caesar.

The faces that were turned to his were uncomprehending, disconcerted and angry. The attention hitherto accorded to the speeches was perceptibly distracted. Catulus, to whom the mere name of Caesar was like a red rag to a bull, flushed purple as the blood surged to his head; Pompeius compressed his full lips, and Crassus' vacant eyes betrayed a flicker of interest. Even Cato seemed for a moment to be thrown out of his stride; the construction of his periods suffered, his epithets became confused, and it was with difficulty that he avoided a breakdown. Then, however, he thrust out his great head like a bull about to charge, and continued his speech in more violent and scathing tones than before.

One man alone was instantly master of the situation: Cicero, who was at home in any saddle; the innumerable lawsuits in which he had been engaged had accustomed him to grasp and to deal with the most improbable contingencies. With narrowed eyes he peered searchingly at the newcomer, trying to decipher his expression.

In the end, he could no longer endure to sit still and unsatisfied; he must discover how it was possible that the *triumphator* should have entered the city. Slowly he rose, and on silent feet slipped along the gangway and up the steps to Caesar's seat. He nodded, with an expression of the sweetest amiability on his foxy countenance, and lowered himself into an empty chair at Caesar's side.

Julius nodded in return, but did not seem disposed to take any further notice of his neighbor. This was not to Cicero's liking. Uneasily he turned and twisted in his chair, and after repeatedly clearing his throat he at last leaned over toward Caesar and inquired, softly and cautiously, and doing his best to speak in a tone of paternal benevolence:

"To what fortunate circumstances do we owe your presence among us?"

Caesar looked up with some annoyance, glanced at Cato as though to apologize for the undesired disturbance, and finally decided to answer.

"I think you must know," he said, faintly surprised. "I am a candidate for the Consulate."

"Yes—but are you soliciting votes in person?" came the rejoinder, swift as an arrow.

A shrug of the shoulders from Caesar: "Since you have refused me the dispensation . . ."

Cicero's face wore a look of infinite cunning; now, he thought, he could spring the snare.

"You are forgetting," he fluted, "that you must not enter the city before the triumph."

Caesar's mouth twitched at the corners.

"Oh, the ridiculous triumph!" His tone was casual and negligent. "I shall just do without it." His eyes, now clear and steady, captured the shifty gaze of the "Father of the Fatherland." "The Consulate," he added, "is more important."

Cicero blinked and grimaced as though his ears had been boxed. He seemed about to make some protest, but decided to hold his peace; for a while he sat staring vacantly before him, and then, rising, he slunk silently back to his place.

He was no sooner there than inquisitive faces were turned to him on every side. There were whispers and sudden silences, and presently the great news was passing from mouth to mouth, so startling those who heard it that they no longer made any pretence of attending to the orator. Amidst the general excitement Cato concluded his speech, whose pithy phrases no longer found an echo in his hearers.

Suddenly there was a paralyzed silence. Caesar, who since his brief conversation with Cicero had kept his eyes fixed on the floor, now raised them, and swept them slowly across the hall, travelling from man to man as though to weigh them and sum them up. Once more his gray, inexorably fearless

eyes rested on Cicero, glided on to Catulus, wavered over Pompeius, passed over Crassus, included, with imperceptible disdain, a little crowd of professional placemen who voted "yes" or "no" with their leaders, and finally followed Cato step by step as he returned to his seat. All felt the potency of this glance, all were conscious of the power that emanated from it, and none even thought to resist that power. Then the lifted eyelids drooped again, and Caesar's face resumed its former marmoreal immobility.

Immediately afterwards the presiding Consul rose, and after clearing his throat in an embarrassed fashion, announced that the session was closed. The assembled fathers began to rise and leave the hall, furious to think that for a moment they had no longer felt themselves their own masters, but had bowed before a will immeasurably stronger than their own.

But who could have imagined that Caesar would forego the triumph—his first triumph!

THE PATH OF FAME

Now the round hall was almost empty. At the doors a few senators were still conversing, while here and there a private reporter was completing the fair copy of his patron's speech. Caesar, having greeted a few of the more friendly or less hostile senators, went up to Crassus. Side by side they left the hall: Licinius walking with his massive head bowed lower than was his wont, while the young man's was lifted like that of a hound scenting its quarry.

Not until they had reached the street did Caesar open the conversation.

"I have been in Transpadana," he began.

"Oh, have you?" said Crassus, in a lifeless tone that betrayed no interest in the subject. His eyes were still dull and gloomy.

"Caburus sends his greetings to you."

"Thanks . . ."

"They are of good courage, and they are waiting."

"Waiting for what?"

Caesar, seemingly, did not remark his friend's depression. In the same nonchalant tone he continued:

"You know the saying of Archimedes: 'Give me a firm standpoint and I will lift the world from its foundations'?"

Crassus nodded, secretly wondering at the other's curious change of subject. But Caesar continued: "I have found our Archimedean point; it is known as Gaul."

"H'm!"

"It is the problem of the day, even though we in Rome are unwilling to admit it. I have kept my eyes open on my travels, Crassus; I have conferred with Massiliot and Narbonese traders, with chieftains of the Allobroges, with Transpadanian notables, and over and over again this problem cropped up. For us its solution has become a matter of life and death."

"Do you think so?" Despite his lethargy, there was now something like a faint interest in Crassus' tone.

Caesar raised his forefinger and drew two lines in the air: one vertical, one horizontal.

"The Rhine runs so, and the Alps so," he explained. "To the east and north is the country settled by the Germani: a vast horde of men and peoples of incalculable possibilities. Ask one of the old Marian veterans what sort of fellows they are."

"Yes, yes . . ." Crassus' eyes were once more dull and gloomy.

"They are now," continued Caesar, "on the move, and are pouring westward. Their leading tribes have already covered the Rhine, and are turning slowly but steadily southward. And here, before it is too late, we must raise a barrier, or in a few years they will have overflowed the whole of Gaul."

"Let the barbarians fight it out among themselves!" Crassus was beginning to grow impatient. "What does it matter to us?"

"It is of quite extraordinary importance to us," insisted Caesar, impressively. "If we calmly allow this to happen, we

shall have, in the north, within a measurable lapse of time, a monstrous pressure, directed against Rome, which sooner or later will burst all barriers. That must be prevented—and be prevented by an offensive."

Crassus, irritated beyond endurance, suddenly broke out:

"Must! Must! Why do you tell *me* this? What am *I* to do about it? Tell the Senate, tell the Metelli, the Favii, the Scipii, the whole high and mighty crew who have shared out the government between them!"

Caesar lifted his eyebrows.

"Well—if you are contented with the present state of affairs—"

"Contented! Contented! What can I do to alter it?"

"Be reconciled with Pompeius," replied Caesar, quietly and immediately.

The words were so unexpected that Crassus stood still and stared at his companion open-mouthed.

"Be reconciled—" he brought out at last. "Oh! Simply be reconciled with Pompeius! Splendid! No trouble about that! Why not at once fetch the moon down to the earth?"

"Crassus!" Caesar shook his head. "Your isolation seems really to have clouded your sight. Otherwise you would surely know that I never set my mind on anything impossible; and also that I actually achieve anything on which I set my mind."

Crassus' chin had sunk on to his breast again.

"That *is* impossible," he murmured. "Between Pompeius and myself . . . There is so much . . ."

"Less than you think," interrupted Caesar. "A misunderstanding or two—that is all. But you are both so immersed in your resentment that you have lost the way to one another."

"And you know the way?" There was a mocking assumption of resignation in the toneless voice.

"At least I am confident of finding it—because it must be found."

Crassus shook his head.

"Pompeius too is powerless today."

"Apart from us. Let him be reunited with us, and there is nothing that can prevent our supremacy."

They had come to the Via Sacra, the evening promenade of aristocratic idlers, who were strolling slowly, laughing and talking, along the front of the palaces and stately buildings. The doorkeeper of the pontifical palace hastily prepared to open the door, but his master waved his hand in silence and passed on. The street began to rise gently, and now at every step the buildings that lined it displayed an increasing and almost barbaric splendor; and high above the glitter of gold and gleam of marble shone the crown of the Capitol, flooded with sunlight, and overtopping the city with an almost unreal radiance.

"The Via Triumphalis," said Caesar, smiling. "The way of Fame. Really I ought to have entered it at the head of my troops. Still, it is just as well . . ."

Crassus was not listening.

"How do you propose," he said, in the tone of one who has been pondering profoundly, "to win Pompeius back to us?"

Caesar concealed a smile. He noted, with secret delight, that his words had roused his companion.

"I shall know what to do," he replied, "when I stand before him. He has asked me to go and see him."

Crassus pricked up his ears.

"When?"

"I had occasion to exchange a few words with him immediately after the session. He too sees that the present position is untenable."

"And he consented—" Crassus began.

"For the present, only to receive me," said Caesar, quickly interrupting him. "But you know what that means with Pompeius. It only rests with us to make him clearly realize the necessity of an alliance.—And that, I think, will not be too difficult," he said, thinking aloud. "Pompeius is much too intelligent to fail to see where his advantage lies. He only needs to be asked."

They had almost reached the top of the hill, emerging from the bright green of the beeches and chestnuts, and the darker verdure of the pines and cypresses, to the bright, austere purity of the summit. Julius glanced quickly at his companion. Crassus' bearing was unchanged; absorbed in thought, he set one foot heavily before the other. But the paralyzing apathy was gone. Silently they went forward until the wide platform was reached; and there they halted. At their feet the mighty city lay outspread, the interminable succession of houses only here and there interrupted by a wide open place, or a block of public buildings. The reek of a thousand dinners rose into the air from the hearths of the city; here and there a light already twinkled in a window, for the lower part of the valley lay in the first shades of approaching twilight, and only the summits of the sister hills—the Vatican, the Quirinal, the Esquiline, the Coelian and the rest—still shone as in greeting in the beams of the setting sun. The western sky—above the invisible sea—was a symphony of color, ranging from a deep purple to the tenderest orange, and in the east, above the plains, the loveliest blue merged into a transparent green. Caesar, looking about him— felt his bosom swell with an overwhelming emotion.

"Look," he said, in an undertone, "how the city lies there, snuggling amidst the hills like a child on its mother's breast. See how its houses press together; think of the thousands of lives they shelter, and their thousands of clashing and intersecting desires; the breeding-place of ideas and plans and aims immeasurable. Do you not feel it rising up to us like a mighty wave, this union of countless existences, all bound into one unity, whose voice, when it utters the proud name of Rome, peals over the world like a trumpet? Do you not feel, as I do, the intoxicating longing to let this thronging and striving world have its will of you—to accept it and become a part of it, and yet to be loved of it all? O Rome, Rome, thou great and splendid city, thou queen of the world, how glorious must it be to rule thee! How wonderful to assemble

all thy powers, to order and unite them, and to lead them up the steep way to the height which thy destiny hath allotted to thee! How tremendous a thing to take thee in one's hands, thou, the unique instrument of humanity, and begin the great task whose final aim is the perfection of all existing things! Give thyself to me, Rome, confide thy soul to my will, grant that through thee I may achieve what I do not seek for my own sake, but for thee and for all that is noble, great and beautiful!" As in an ecstasy he had stretched out his arms to the city, that now lay almost wholly in darkness, a vast, self-contained mass. Now he turned to his companion, and Licinius, full of a rare and singular emotion, gazed into the great, blazing eyes of the inspired enthusiast. There was fire in those eyes, and yet a great tenderness.

"Crassus!" cried Caesar. "Be my friend! Help me! Do not let the tremendous things we are planning be wrecked on foolish trivialities!"

His passionate words were like the flame of a torch plunged into dry brushwood. Crassus drew himself up; a light shone in the lustreless eyes, and the dull, oleaginous voice rang out:

"No, by the gods, I will not! All that you wish, my little Caesar, all that you wish! Go to Pompeius! Speak to him! And if you can manage it, if you succeed in bringing him back to us, then—"

The heavy paw that crashed affectionately on Caesar's shoulder came near to felling him to the ground. He looked Licinius in the eyes and smiled as though suddenly set free.

"Then I shall be Consul," he said, with an attempt at a jest.

"Yes," agreed Crassus. "And you shall conquer Gaul!"

"And lift the world out of its foundations!" said Caesar, smiling again.

Crassus looked hard at him. He swallowed; then he said, half under his breath, and almost with awe:

"By Zeus, you are the man to do it!"

BATTLES AND WOUNDS

"The mistress is in the garden."

Caesar nodded his thanks, and went through the hall. The big room was bare and austere as ever. But involuntarily the visitor became conscious of a certain softness, a certain relaxation, something that was almost feminine—as one does in a house in which there is no man. He could not explain it more clearly to himself; he did not know just what and where it was; he had never met Servilia's husband face to face, and was hardly aware of his existence; and yet in these rooms, in the air itself, there had lingered something of Junius, an imponderable something which had constantly reminded Caesar of his existence. Now it was gone, wholly and for good, since the master of the house had left his home forever, for a little foursquare dwelling among the tombs of the Appian Way.

For a moment he considered whether he should observe the formalities and offer Servilia the customary condolence. But he at once rejected the idea; what was the use of such a comedy? Had not absolute honesty always been the basis of their relations? Should he behave differently now—merely in order to observe a social usage? He shrugged his shoulders as though casting off a burden, and drawing a deep breath he stepped out into the garden.

There, in the distance, was Servilia. On the semicircular stone bench which he knew so well she was sitting with little Marcus, and the two were so absorbed in what they were reading together that the outer world seemed to have no existence for them.

Only at the creaking of the gravel path did the young widow look up. Abstractedly she raised her eyes, then, on recognizing her visitor, she sprang up and hastened towards him. The boy had risen too, but he stood still, shy and hesitating.

"You, Caius?" she cried gladly. "How nice of you to have found the way here!"

He took the proffered hand firmly in both his own.

"I often thought of this garden when I was in Spain," he said, with a cheerful smile.

Leading him to the bench, she continued eagerly:

"I have known for a week that you were back. Why did you not come to me sooner? Had you so much to do?"

"More than I can tell you. Nevertheless, I will tell you."

Changing the subject in her somewhat nervous delight in seeing him once more (or so it seemed to him), she pointed to the boy:

"Would you have known Marcus again?"

"Hardly." Smiling, Caesar held out his hand. "How tall he has grown! Salve, Marcus!"

Solemnly the child lay his fingers in the hand outstretched to him. "Salve, Caesar," he said, politely but with reserve.

"What," cried the visitor gaily, "is that the way to greet an old friend? Aren't you at all glad to see me again?"

"Yes, I am glad," replied the boy, with the same grave composure.

His mother laughed. "He is really glad, Caius; you may believe him. But it is not consistent with his patrician dignity to express his pleasure in so many words."

The child flushed. This did not escape Caesar, who at once replied, with infinite tact:

"He is quite right. And after all, it is what he feels that matters. Isn't it, Marcus?"

"Yes." Like all that the eight-year-old boy said, the word was spoken gravely, but his big eyes were bright with gratitude.

"But come, sit down," cried Servilia, still eager and excited. "You must be tired.—Shall I send for anything?"

"Nothing," Caesar protested, smiling. "If I may stay here a little while I shall be more than contented."

"As long as you like!" she cried. "You know that you are always welcome here." Her glance fell on the child, who stood before her, waiting. "Do you want anything, Marcus?"

The child nodded.

"Can I go, mother?"

"Where?—Why, yes!" A faint shadow dimmed her radiant gladness. "Yes, go—Of course, he has an invitation," she explained, turning to Caesar.

"Then, to be sure, we must not keep him.—Farewell, Marcus."

Once more the child gravely touched the outstretched hand, threw himself passionately into his mother's arms for a moment, and trotted off. Caesar and Servilia watched him as he went.

"What do you think of him?" asked Servilia, after a moment's silence.

"On the whole, I think he has turned out well," replied Caesar. "Well behaved, straightforward, honest. Perhaps a little serious for his age."

"That is Cato's influence," she explained, with a faint sigh.

"Cato's?" Caesar frowned with displeasure. "How does that come about?"

"He is very wide awake, and already he sees through the majority of people, and Cato's strict integrity had such an attraction for him that he became greatly attached to him."

"I do not know," said Caesar, slowly, in a reflective tone, "whether that is the right connection for him. All respect for Cato's character; but the man is a visionary, who will only fill the boy's head with senseless crotchets. Rome cannot be saved today by mere republican virtue. We need men who are clear-sighted as well as incorruptible; men with sober minds, not confused dreamers." Both were silent; then Caesar, who never dwelt on unpleasant thoughts, diverted the conversation into another channel. "The last few days have involved a great deal of work."

"Yes," she rejoined, quickly, glad of the change of subject. "You were going to tell me. What has happened? Will you be Consul?"

"Yes," he nodded. "Yes," he repeated, with emphasis. "My election is certain. The Curia is no longer attempting to oppose it. The only thing they have been able to think of is

an attempt to give me one of themselves as a colleague, who will clap on the brakes if I drive the car too quickly. Guess who he is."

She shrugged her shoulders. "How should I know?—Well?"

"My old enemy Bibulus." He stretched himself contentedly. "That is peculiarly malicious; everyone in Rome knows that we have hated each other cordially ever since we were children.—Well, once again I shall be too much for him."

"How has this happened so suddenly?"

"They have learned of my alliance with Pompeius and Crassus; then, quite rightly, they realized that further opposition was useless."

"Yes," she nodded. "That was yet another stroke of genius on your part."

He carelessly declined the compliment.

"It was nothing so wonderful; one only had to make it clear to the two old gamecocks that a reconciliation was in the general interest; the rest followed of itself. Now, of course, we are a power unequalled by any other in Rome."

She was about to make a hasty rejoinder, but hesitated, and finally suggested:

"So long as the same thing doesn't happen as once before."

He looked at her inquiringly.

"What do you mean? Pompeius' quarrel with Crassus? No fear of that; I am there now, and as far as that goes, I now have sufficient influence—"

"That is just it," she said, quietly.

He glanced at her again. He reflected for a moment, and understood her.

"You think they might . . ."

"You have always made things too easy for them. They grew accustomed to count on you; they knew that you would always get them out of their difficulties. Now they suddenly see one whom they have hitherto regarded only as a welcome instrument equally privileged with themselves, and they real-

ize that they are really working for the man who seems to be working for them. From that realization to rivalry is only a step."

He smiled quietly.

"I too have foreseen that."

"Really?"

"I shall have little difficulty with Crassus; he is tired and satiated; he has only one longing left—to win military laurels."

"Strange!"

"But comprehensible, when you know the man: his repressed jealousy of Pompeius is at work; he cannot get over the fact that in the slave's war Gnaeus robbed him of the fame he coveted; he wants to show that he is as good a strategist as the conqueror of Mithridates." He smiled again. "Well, that can be arranged. One will think out some harmless expedition for him, which will nevertheless appear to be of some importance; perhaps I will send him to Egypt, where we shall have after all to intervene once more—or to Asia, where he can straighten out the involved affairs of the petty kings. Then the old man will be able to rest, and settle down peacefully in Rome."

"So much for Crassus," she assented. "But Pompeius?"

He played one of his swift and utterly unexpected strokes:

"Pompeius will marry Julia."

She could hardly believe her ears.

"Marry whom?"

"My daughter Julia; he has fallen thoroughly in love with her, and they are already secretly betrothed." She gazed at him fixedly, awed by this man's gift of divination, which anticipated every thought in other men's minds, and was ready with the counterstroke even before the attack could be delivered. He added, with comfortable equanimity: "By that I have finally bound him to me; from the moment of his marriage his affairs are mine also." He fell silent, pursuing his train of thought, his hands clasped about an updrawn knee.

After a pause he said—to all appearance quite casually: "For that matter, I too am thinking of marrying again."

She looked up, taken unawares. He continued quickly: "For a long while, for too long, there has been no woman in my house. In my new position I cannot let that continue."

She was unwillingly aware that her heart was beating more strongly. With forced composure she asked:

"Are you thinking of anyone in particular?"

"Of course," he said. "My wife must be so undeniably endowed with certain qualities that for me the idea of marrying again without having a particular person in mind would be ridiculous. Three things I require of her: noble blood, the ability to preside over my household, and a son who will be my heir."

Her heart was beating still more violently. It seemed to her that he must hear it.

"And you say you have found her?"

"Yes."

"Who is she?" She spoke breathlessly, all but choking.

"The daughter of Calpurnius Piso." Had he not been so absorbed in his thoughts, he must have noted the pallor that spread over her face, the numbness that crept into her features. But he continued: "I learned to know her in her father's house: a gentle, modest girl, but merry and cheerful, and so young that I can surely shape her without breaking her."

She laughed, and the laugh made him look up. His keen ear had detected an insincere and almost grating tone.

"Well," she cried, with exaggerated heartiness, "one must wish you happiness. Do not forget—Caesar—to invite me to the double wedding!"

He listened more and more attentively. That she had addressed him—for the first time during the whole period of their relations—by his family name, had startled him, and suddenly, as he gazed into the pale, noble face, beneath whose rigidity barely suppressed passion and disappointment and anger were gathering, he understood what a grievous wound

he had unconsciously dealt her, understood that she still loved him, and had hoped one day to take her place beside him . . . and realized that the refuge of her house was lost to him for ever.

After a pause in which neither could find a word to say, a pause that seemed endless, full of unspeakable bitterness for both, he rose to his feet.

"It is late," he said, "and I must go home." He suddenly remembered that Servilia had once concluded her first conversation with him by the very same words. What had not happened between that day and this!

"Farewell, Servilia."

She sat motionless, but automatically bent her head.

"Farewell, Caesar."

THE CONSUL

THE gigantic figures of the Germani had seemed to fill the whole room. Now, treading heavily, they left it, followed by the little Jewish pedlar with the obsequious smile who had served them as interpreter.

Thoughtfully Caesar gazed into vacancy, his left hand kneading the right, into which the blood that had been squeezed out of it by the pressure of the bear-like paws was beginning to return. The secretary who had seen the envoys off the premises returned, but Caesar did not notice him.

At last he turned his head; his eyes showed that he had returned to the present moment, and he said, briskly:

"Two scribes. Quickly."

The secretary whirled off and returned with the two scribes, waving in his hand a sheet of papyrus, which he handed to Caesar.

"Today's Senatorial protocol."

Caesar glanced at it hastily, began to read it, and was at once absorbed in its contents. The others waited. Suddenly, without raising his eyes:

"Carus!" he called.

"Lord!"

"In the inventory of the public lands relating to the colonization scheme—"

"Lex Pompeia," whispered the secretary hastily to the scribe.

"—the Campanian domains are to be included." He laid the protocol on the table, and began to make short strokes in the margin with a leaden stylus: reference-marks relating to ideas, plans, intentions.—"Hirtius!"

"Consul!" (This from the secretary.)

"The draft of the law relating to the provincial administration is to be got ready for the Senate. I shall introduce it this week after all. At the same time have a copy prepared for the popular assembly."

"Yes, Consul."

"Philinius!"

"Lord!"

"A letter to the presidency of the tax-farmer's league: I am ready to agree to the requested abatement of the quota, but I warn them that there must be no exploitation of the provinces; otherwise I shall be compelled to take the severest measures. A cautious allusion to my projected laws affecting the provinces." He had finished reading the protocol, and initialled it.

"Have people become accustomed yet to the publication of the reports of the sessions?" he asked the secretary.

"The people crowd at the street-corners to read them," was the reply. "The innovation is generally commended."

"Curious that no one ever thought of it before." He began to look through the post. "What is the general feeling?"

"Favorable."

Caesar nodded. "I will take advantage of it."

"The masses are beginning to understand that you are acting in accordance with their interests."

"Their interests? No.—Yes.—As one looks at it.—Carus!"

"Lord!"

"A letter to Calpurnius Piso: will he please come to see me

at once. Reason: the next election to the Consulate.—Is anyone in the antechamber yet?"

Hirtius smiled faintly: "Yes."

"Why do you smile? Who is it?"

"Gabinius!"

Caesar looked up. "Aulus Gabinius?"

"Yes."

"Interesting.—Carus, the letter to Piso is cancelled."

"Yes, lord."

"Instead, a letter to Cicero.—Hirtius!"

"Consul!"

"Go to Gabinius. Take him to the library. Ask him, from me, if he will kindly wait a little while."

"Yes, Consul."

"Politely, Hirtius. And come straight back."

"Yes, Consul." Hirtius hurried out.

"Carus!"

"Lord!"

"Letter to Cicero. With reference to Cornelius Balbus' call on him. I once more beg him urgently to consider our proposals, and am waiting to hear from him."

Hirtius returned, letters and despatches under his arm.

"Gabinius will wait."

"Give me those." The Consul took the documents and ran through them in quick succession. One of the letters he passed silently to Hirtius, who read it, and cried, in astonishment:

"Cicero refuses!"

Caesar shrugged his shoulders.

"His affair.—Carus!"

"Lord!"

"Letter to Cicero cancelled. Letter to Clodius: I am waiting for him to introduce his bill."

"Yes, lord."

Hirtius stared at Caesar in dismay.

"You intend—"

"I have done my best to be friendly with him. If he won't —I too can behave otherwise."

"But a man who saved the State from Catilina!"

Caesar opened his eyes in surprise; that was enough to silence further protest.

"What do you know of Catilina!" He tossed a roll of papyrus on to the table before the scribes. "Philinus: An express letter to the minister of the Egyptian royal household: His application in respect of the title of friend for the king will be granted on payment of the taxes."

"Six thousand talents," whispered the secretary.

Wrinkling his forehead, Caesar bent over the hastily scribbling scribes.

"Now go!" he ordered, curtly. The two men hurried out. Caesar waited until the curtain had fallen behind them.

Then, turning to the secretary:

"Where have you put the Gaul?" he asked.

"In my room."

"He is to start for home today. You will send reliable people with him, who will collect data relating to the Germanic invasion. When they have obtained them they will return immediately. It is important that they should obtain the most accurate information. Further, they must obtain data for completing the maps of Gaul; they must note the strategic points, the strength, armaments and probable mustering places of their legions. This last in secret: even the Gaul, Di—Divi—What is his name?"

"Divitiacus, duke of the Aedni."

"Of course. Even he must know nothing of the inquiries." The secretary's stylus flew over his writing-tablet.—"Do you know what the Germanic envoys wanted of me?"

"A treaty of peace and friendship—"

"Nonsense: they wanted to sound me: to learn whether we are able to oppose their penetration of Gaul, and whether we intend to do so. You can guess what my answer was."

"You told them—"

"I told them nothing. Polite phrases; no pledges. Their

chief acquires the title of king; the bears must be lulled into security.—Did you have a look at them?"

"Yes."

"Their eyes? Like blue flames. Imagine hundreds of thousands of such giants overflowing Gaul: in a couple of years we should have a second invasion of the Cimbrii. That must be prevented."

"The war—"

"The war will break out next year: in Gaul. You have despatched my plans to Transpadana?"

"Concerning the recruiting? Yes."

"Good.—Now bring Gabinius here."

The secretary departed. He admired Caesar; but he was not sorry to escape, for a while, the incessant bombardment of instructions.

Gabinius, once people's tribune and subsequently second in command to the conqueror of Mithridates, did not know what attitude he had best adopt; he had not met Caesar since the decisive conversation in Crassus' house, when the news from Brundisium had made a clean sweep of all his plans. Now he was uncertain of his footing. What of their former enmity—how far would it count with Caesar, now that he was in power?

Caesar's quietly courteous reception of him reassured him slightly; the Consul had forgotten the past or was big enough to behave as though he had done so.

"To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?"

Gabinius hesitated. Then, making up his mind:

"Consul," he said, "I have come to you because—"

"Yes?"

"Because I should like to clear up certain old misunderstandings."

"Yes."

"If you will"—he brought out the words with difficulty—"I offer you a reconciliation."

"With whom?"

"With me," said Gabinius, with an effort. "There is an old quarrel between us; I should like to make an end of it."

There was a pause when he had spoken. Caesar pondered his answer, word by word, before he replied.

"I, for my part, have ended it long ago, Gabinius: you ought to know that."

Gabinius nervously nodded his head repeatedly.

"Of course, of course. That was what made it possible for me—that was the reason I came—" He suddenly rose to his feet. "Caesar," he said, steadily, "let us talk together as man to man. It is no shame to admit one's errors. You were in the right, and I was in the wrong."

A deprecating smile from Caesar. "I had luck."

"No!—Luck—well, of course, that had something to do with it. But during the last year I have had time enough for reflection. I have gone through your whole development. How you began with no great advantages, and worked your way up, despite the lethargy, the stupidity, the malevolence of the others—to the place where you stand today—and which for you is only a spring-board—" He interrupted himself, and with a sudden passionate gesture held out both hands to Caesar.—"You—you were the only one—you alone understood—the rest of us surrendered ourselves to the moment—we thought only of what the day, even the hour, offered us —without plans—without aim—you alone knew your way—had the power and the will to take what was yours—what was yours by right.—Pompeius—Pompeius has done great things for Rome—but you did more; he was afraid of the last step, but for you no step was the last. You are not only the conqueror—every day one heard of a fresh victory—you were the leader—whom all must follow—who alone can raise the sinking Republic—and for that reason—for that—"

Quietly Caesar grasped the still outstretched hands of the excited man, pressed them down to his side, and pushed Gabinius back into the chair from which his old adversary had risen.

"I thank you," he said quietly. "You are the first who has

really understood me. For that reason it pleases me more than I can tell you that you have come to me." He released the trembling hands, and returned to his chair—with some deliberation, in order to conceal his secret emotion. "Peace!—I should be a fool to refuse your hand. You were one of the few whose opposition I took seriously; how could I fail to value as a friend the man I respected as an enemy?" Gabinius looked at him gratefully. Caesar, collecting his thoughts, continued: "When I was told that you had come, Gabinius, I was about to send for one of my friends, in order to ask him to help me. I have held back the letter, hoping that you would offer to give me the help I require." He smiled his irresistibly winning smile. "Will you refuse the first request I make of you?"

"Speak, Caesar," said Gabinius, in suppressed emotion.

"I have great plans," said Caesar. "You shall hear them all when they are ripe. But in order to carry them out I need time—several years—and men to stand beside me when I no longer fill the highest office in the State. Will you be one of them—will you be the first among them?"

Gabinius nodded, strung to the highest pitch of excitement.

"What am I to do?"

The reply exceeded his boldest expectations.

"You shall take over the Consulate in the coming year, together with Calpurnius Piso."

Gabinius sat still as though paralyzed.

"The Consulate?" he repeated, doubtfully.

Caesar shrugged his shoulders.

"We must take our measures betimes. Now that we have the power we can fill the most important posts with our friends: if we let the moment slip our enemies will win the upper hand again."

Gabinius drew a deep breath. Caesar's magnanimous offer had moved him profoundly. Very quietly, in a faltering voice, he whispered:

"Caesar—I thank you—"

Caesar, smiling, and superior as ever, shook his head in deprecation.

"Don't thank me," he interrupted. "Don't make too much of it: my obligation to you will be quite as great as yours to me." He changed his tone. "That is understood?"

Gabinius nodded, still unable to control his emotion. It was some moments before he had regained his self-control.

"I too do not come to you with empty hands. I bring you news that is worth hearing."

"And that is?"

"You are too dangerous to the Senate. They are afraid you may make yourself too powerful if you take over a consular province after your year of office."

"Are they afraid of that?"

"For that reason they do not intend to give you a province."

"What!" He sprang to his feet, every muscle in his sinewy body contracted.

"No. You are to be given the administration of the State forests and domains."

Silence. Caesar's brow was clouded. Then he said, slowly: "That is indeed important news. You are doing me a greater service than you imagine." He flung himself back into his chair. "A cunning idea; cunning! But they have reckoned without their host!" His finger touched the hanging gong on the table. Hirtius rushed into the room.

"Consul?"

"Hirtius, you must go at once to Pompeius." He turned to Gabinius. "You will excuse me." And then again to Hirtius: "A draft of a bill to be laid directly before the popular assembly." The secretary's stylus raced over his tablet. "Assignment of Transpadana and Illyria including the frontier forces to the Consul Caius Caesar for"—he reflected for a moment —"five years. Two—no, three legions. Term of office commences—retrospectively—on the first of March of this year. The rough draft you will communicate at once to Pompeius,

verbally, and you will tell him that I will call on him today in order to discover all details. Be quick!"

"Yes, Consul!" Hirtius rushed from the room. Caesar turned again to Gabinius.

"If their lordships try to play their tricks on me the popular assembly shall salt their broth for them!"

"And the Senate?" objected Gabinius, almost timidly.

A savage gesture—the movement of a boxer about to rush on his opponent:

"The Senate can go to Hades!"

ALONE . . .

THE last of the guests had gone.

Caesar stood motionless, as he had stood to watch Julia leave the hall with her newly-wedded husband. He seemed still to see the slender, fragile form of his daughter, who, in her festal attire, without other adornment than her modesty and her bridal wreath, had looked doubly adorable. Still he seemed to feel the maiden body nestling confidently against him, until she tore herself from his arms to follow the husband to whom she had that day spoken the ever-beautiful words, hallowed by immemorial tradition: "Where thou art, Caius, there will I, Caia, be also."

Surely she would be happy—if there were any sort of guarantee of human happiness. Pompeius was a man of truly noble character, full of tact and sympathy and genuine kindliness. And he loved Julia; this was no mere marriage of convenience, entered into for social or political reasons. Every glance of his betrayed his affection; as did the tenderness that thrilled his voice when he spoke to his bride, and the infinitely gentle and tender gesture with which he laid his arm about her shoulders. And she had confidence in him, and that budding affection which in the quiet warmth of their life together would unfold into beauty and completeness.

Now at last the foundations were laid on which Caesar would build his life's work. The alliance of the two powerful families constituted a base which nothing could shake. Here,

for the first time since the beginnings of the Republic, were the beginnings of something resembling a dynasty. Now he had only one desire: for the son to whom he could hand on his work if he had to disappear before its completion, if he himself could not achieve what he intended.

This thought reminded him of the second bride of the double wedding, the daughter of his friend Calpurnius Piso, who had that day become his wife.

Silent, scared, motionless, she was standing there and gazing at him with wide, fearful eyes. How long had she been waiting? Suddenly he began to feel something like compassion for this trembling girl whose lord and master he had become. It was almost as though Julia had changed her face and figure, as though he had gained a new daughter in her stead, a daughter to be protected and cherished and sheltered from the blustering winds of life.

"Are you not tired, Calpurnia?" he asked her kindly. "Will you not sit down?"

As though her feet had been dragged from under her, she dropped into the nearest chair, and answered, in her still rather thin, girlish voice:

"Yes, Caesar."

He slowly drew nearer to her, and saw the terror in her eyes increasing. Cautiously he fetched a chair, and sat beside her, taking both her hands, which she passively surrendered.

"Are you afraid of me, Calpurnia?"

She looked at him helplessly, in silence.

"Cheer up, child," he said, gently. She tried to nod, but she had not even enough strength to move her head. He continued: "You ought not to be afraid. See"—he reflected a moment, and then reverted to his former train of thought—"today my daughter has left me. I should now be quite alone with my old mother if you were not here. You must be to me not only the comrade to whom I tell my troubles, but, above all, youth, pouring its light over all the dark places of my life. If the one task is sometimes difficult, the other will make

it easy; you have nothing to do but be yourself, always yourself."

"Yes, Caesar."

He looked at her questioningly. He could not solve the enigma of those wide open eyes: was it still fear—or perhaps the effort to understand him, to get into contact with him?

"Call me Caius," he begged, softly. "Caesar—that is for strangers. And you are going to be my friend, are you not?"

"Yes, Cae—Yes . . . Caius."

"Caius," he repeated, dreamily. "How musical that sounds on your lips . . . like the opening of a song." He released her hands, and laid his arm on the back of her chair. "My timid little bird! I believe my house seems to you today like a golden cage, and here you are, shut in the cage, and looking in vain for the door. You must learn to realize that there is nothing here to restrain you, that you have all the liberty you could possibly wish, and that I want nothing from you that you do not give me of your own free will, and with all your heart. Do you hear, Calpurnia?"

"Yes, Caesar."

In vain his eyes sought to probe her own; in the depths of the dilated pupils there was still the same mysterious shadow that seemed like a desperate protest against intrusion. But he did not abandon the attempt.

"I know you will be happy here once you begin to feel at home. Believe me, in my heart, there is still so much of the child that has played until it is tired, and now longs to rest its head on a soft shoulder; so much that longs for gaiety and cheerfulness, for playfulness and laughter. And the higher I climb, the more clearly I see my way, the stronger grows this longing. It is not easy, Calpurnia, to have outstripped the rest. . . ." He laid his hand on her shoulder, and felt the quiver of the tender muscles as he drew her gently towards him. "I shall find in you all that I am seeking, Calpurnia?"

"Yes, Caesar."

How devoid of all feeling, how mechanical was this eternal "Caesar!" He felt a chill creeping into his heart. But he sup-

pressed the feeling at once; the warmth of the young body which he had drawn against his own was gradually kindling a fire within him that gave a glowing warmth to his words. He pressed her closer still, and his voice became softer, hoarse, more urgent.

"But there is something more that I want from you, my young wife. I want not only the bright daylight; I want the purple darkness of the night, with all its mysteries and wonders. I want even the ecstasy into which I can sink and forget myself; the intoxication that will engulf me and set me free and purify me. You will give me not only the white hours of the day, but also the crimson hours of the night!"

"Yes, Caesar."

Did she know what she was saying? Her cheeks, that had been flushed with health, were pale; the lips that trembled as they spoke the words were bloodless. In her eyes an uneasy light was flickering. Was it maiden shame—or had the fire in which he was burning kindled a response? He laid his other arm about her, imprisoning her in his embrace; his lips parted the waves of hair that hid her little ear, and whispered:

"This is the night in which you are truly to become my wife! This night a storm will rage over you which will tear open all your flowers, so that tomorrow you will shine all over like a meadow in spring! This night you will learn what it is to burn in the supremest fire, to swoon and die in the leaping flames! This night your maidenhood will fall away from you as though it were an old garment, and all the glory of the woman will descend upon you in your becoming one with the man to whom you have given yourself! Come!" He rose, in passionate and barely controlled emotion, lifting her in his embrace. His dry, thirsting lips sought hers.

Two little hands were thrust against his breast in desperate refusal. A childish face, distorted with terror, was helplessly averted. From quivering lips broke the terrified cry: "No, Caesar!"

He was suddenly sobered; the burning fire within him

sank down and was extinguished. His blazing eyes were now cold and clear; in objective and inexorable scrutiny they looked into hers—into the very depths. The grip of his arms relaxed.

"No," he said, without expression. "No. . ."

He stepped back from her, gazed at the floor, and reflected, his hands pressed against his still throbbing heart. At last he looked up.

"It is late," he said, in the same expressionless voice. "You are the housewife. Have the tables cleared. Good night."

And with slow, dragging steps he went to his bed-chamber —alone.

THE HUNT IS UP

THREE hounds had Caesar in his chase after supremacy, and all three were thoroughbred.

Clodius was the first to be slipped. The patrician dandy, who had willingly surrendered his aristocratic rank in order to become a people's tribune, was utterly devoted to him; he had never forgotten what Caesar had done for him years before. Cicero, the censor, had wished to institute legal proceedings against the wanton Clodius. Caesar alone had saved him. Since then he had loved Caesar as fanatically as he hated Cicero.

For a long while he had been waiting for the opportunity, in virtue of his powers as tribune, to submit the draft of a statute to the people: Those who had ever condemned a Roman citizen to death without consulting the people should be outlawed. This was a tardy revenge for Cicero's summary proceedings against Catilina's confederates. Caesar had held him back, waiting for the most favourable moment. Now he gave him a free hand.

The proposal fell like a heavy stone upon thin ice. The popular assembly, a turbulent city rabble, were enraptured; there would soon be fine doings! They voted in favor of the proposal. This was a terrific slap in the face for the Senate, which began to buzz like an angry swarm of bees. A

deputation waited on the Consul. Bibulus, Caesar's colleague, who in his arch-conservative heart agreed with the offended senators, promised to do his best; Caesar himself coldly pointed out that it was impossible to refuse to sanction a law which had been carried by constitutional means. Gnashing their teeth, the senators withdrew; they longed to teach the refractory Consul that the Senate had from the beginning been the actual ruler of the Republic, but they were powerless to do so, for behind Caesar, covering his flank and rear, stood Pompeius, whose veterans filled the market-place, and barely troubled to conceal their swords under their garments, and Crassus, who could buy men's souls with the gold he lavished so freely. The law was upheld, and Cicero, before it became effective, fled from Rome, and his house and his villas were razed to the ground.

Clodius had still half his work to do, but Caesar called him off. Patience! Patience!

Then he slipped his second hound: Hirtius, a master of intrigue. He negotiated with Pompeius and conferred with Crassus; he was closeted with Gabinius as often as with Calpurnius Piso; he acted secretly as beater, circumventing the quarry, which had not the least suspicion of what was afoot, until one day, in the market, there was again a hailstorm of motions and resolutions, one on top of the other, and all received with jubilation: Caesar, while still Consul, received the Transpadanian province with the already conquered areas of Gaul; his right to defend the interests of Rome against the frontier peoples in every respect was recognized; his authority was extended to five years; three legions were at his immediate disposal, and reserves could be recruited at need; and the requisite State credits were duly granted.

But this time the Senate did not give way as readily. Bibilus was refractory, and adjourned the session in order to institute pious inquiries as the meteorological omens. Caesar took no heed of him, and continued his negotiations. Bibulus protested, and a section of the Senate, under Cato, supported him. The riot that resulted was forcibly suppressed by Caesar,

at whose orders his colleague and Cicero were arrested. After some weeks of popular excitement the motions were accepted, and in the consular elections which were held at this time, Caesar's candidates, Piso and Gabinius, were elected Consuls for the coming year.

The forcible measures which had been taken against Bibulus and Cato had caused widespread consternation. As for Bibulus, he had never been a favorite, and men laughed at the helpless rage of the badger gone to earth, appended malicious comments to the angry protests which covered the hoardings and dismissed his impotent fury with a witticism: instead of naming the official year after the two Consuls, as usual, people called it the year of the Consuls Julius and Caesar. But Cato! Cato was popular; the populace, having no character, was impressed by his immaculate integrity, and delighted in his coarse, racy locutions, his plain speaking, and his courage, for he hesitated at nothing and feared no one. It was a dangerous thing to make a martyr of Cato!

Nothing was farther from Caesar's intentions. But once more he put Clodius on the scent; since the wild boar might spoil the hunt he must be suppressed. A new law was passed, most agreeable to the populace, as it promised fresh unearned revenue; the King of Cyprus had at one time wickedly supported the pirates; as a penalty, his country was to be annexed and his private property confiscated. In vain Cato set his face against the new adventure. The motion was accepted, and he himself—the most spiteful jest of all—was instructed, as the most proper person available, to preside over the commission which was to draw up the inventory of the treasures of the beautiful but—alas!—remote island.

The trail was free; the hunt could begin. It was high time. Presently, in quick succession, alarming reports came in from the North. The Helvetii, a small but warlike nation, famed for their intractable valour—which had more than once inflicted a bloody defeat on a Roman army—were preparing to make an irruption into territory under Roman jurisdiction.

Already their vanguard had made its appearance on the frontier, by the Lemanian Lake.

Caesar had set his house in order. All would be quiet behind him if he marched northwards, when the flames of a vast conflagration were beginning to appear on the horizon. He left the Capital, with him his third hound, Labienus, straining furiously at the leash.

A LAST BREATHING-PAUSE

By the now familiar hearth sat Caesar, facing his friend Caburus. Contentedly looking about him as he drank his watered wine, he saw that nothing was changed; against the lime-washed walls the household utensils gleamed with their wonted immaculacy, while the clear, independent spirit which shone from the eyes of his hosts, and the earthy paleness of their upright figures, were the same as of old.

Only one thing was different; he was no longer a stranger here; from the joyous yelping of the watch-dog leaping at the end of his chain—it was still the same dog—to the motherly, cordial greeting of the housewife, and the silent but hearty grip of the master's hand, everything assured him of his welcome.

The young people too were there: the two sons, Procillus and Donnotaurus, and the daughter Valeria. Sitting down at a respectful distance from their father and his guest, they listened in silence to the deliberate conversation of the two men, interrupted by long, contented pauses.

"Then you really think," said Caburus, after such a pause, "that you can make use of the youngster there?" He pointed to Procillus.

"I can indeed," Caesar assured him. "I shall, as a matter of fact, find him very necessary; what should I do up yonder without a trustworthy man to interpret my words to the natives?" Procillus flushed with joy and pride. Turning to the housewife, Caesar continued: "You need have no fear, mother; I will look after the apple of your eye."

"So long as he is with you," she smiled, "I have no fear for him."

"And if he is in the thick of it now and again it will do him no harm," interjected Caburus; "the youngster has only to learn to defend himself with his two sound arms."

At this Procillus stretched himself, as though to say that he had no need to learn. Donnotaurus, listening with envious eyes, whispered something in his ear, and the two big, awkward fellows thumped one another and laughed to themselves. Caesar threw a glance of satisfaction at the sunburned, muscular brothers.

"If the Transpadanian enlistments bring me only such recruits I shall be well contented."

"You need have no fear," replied Caburus, with evident pride. "We are all healthy stock; be sure we shan't disgrace you."

Procillus, who felt that he was in a sense the subject under discussion, ventured on a question:

"How many legions has the Consul?" His respect for the honoured guest would not allow him to address Caesar directly.

"At the moment one, stationed in Geneva," Caesar informed him. "But there will soon be more," he added, with a quiet smile.

"Then will our legion of recruits be number two?"

Caesar shook his head. "No, the legions are not numbered in that way. The Transpadanians will be number ten.—My lucky number."

Procillus smiled a beaming smile, as though this fact were to his credit. Caburus resumed the conversation:

"And tomorrow you want to be moving on? Already?"

"I must," replied Caesar, shrugging his shoulders. "Who knows?—while we are quietly sitting here and talking all Hell may be breaking loose up yonder."

"I cannot blame you for hurrying," Caburus nodded. "I know the Helvetii.—But it is a pity," he added quietly.

Caesar pricked up his ears.

"There is something you would have had me do here?"

"Not exactly do—I only wanted to call the leaders together, so that you could speak to them before going further."

"This time, fortunately, that is not necessary," Caesar reassured him. "On the contrary: it is perhaps better that you should give them my message in my stead: it is more certain."

"What message?"

"That from today I regard you and treat you as full Roman citizens. I discussed the question thoroughly, before leaving Rome, with Pompeius and Crassus, and we are all three of one mind. The official recognition of civic rights throughout the whole of Transpadana is a mere matter of form, which I shall regularize directly I return to the Capital. I have already made the practical arrangements in respect of the necessary political and administrative measures."

A profound silence, the silence of intense emotion, followed these words, which at last fulfilled the one great longing of a whole people. At length Caburus began, in a choking voice:

"Caesar—"

Caesar interrupted him: "No need to say anything, Caburus. It is the least recognition with which I could reward your unexampled loyalty and patience!"

"There is only one thing. . ."

"What is that! Are you not contented?"

"We are—if we can be sure—" He broke off, evidently seeking words which would express his doubt plainly without wounding his friend.

Caesar understood, and smiled. Avoiding all cautious circumlocution, he went straight to the root of the matter, as was his wont:

"You think it might be with this as it was with the roll of citizens?" Caburus' eyes were fixed anxiously on his. "There once more I recognize the distrustful farmer." He wagged his forefinger in dissent. "You may be perfectly easy: things are not as they were eight years ago. At that time Crassus and I stood alone against an overwhelming majority

of the Senate. Pompeius was in Asia, and his alliance with us was of the loosest character possible; I was barely at the beginning of my career, and into the bargain I had made myself extremely unpopular with the ruling party." He smiled slightly as he recollected the many spiteful expedients which had at that time obstructed a great part of his official activities. But at once he became serious again. "Today the page has been turned; we three are the rulers of the State, and as long as we are united among ourselves there is no power on earth which can cross our will."

"But the constitution—" objected Caburus.

"The constitution," rejoined Caesar, "will not be infringed in any particular. Only—we have found it necessary to suspend it to a certain respect." He considered for a moment, then continued: "You know our laws, Caburus; you know the *Senatus consultus,* 'Videant consules,' which in exceptional cases gives the supreme officials of the State unlimited powers. We have recognized that such an exceptional case is before us today, and since it is the Senate itself which has plunged the State into confusion, we resolved to take the decision in question by virtue of our own plenary powers. That is all—except that it should properly be described as 'Videant triumviri'."

Silence again: this time the silence of dread and depression. Then Caburus quietly asked, in a tone of hesitating surprise:

"And is there no one who has power to hinder you?"

"No one," said Caesar, emphatically. "Pompeius controls the popular assembly, Crassus the money-market, and I the army." His eyes dilated; the eyes of a ruler of men; their fire seemed to light the room. "Who should prevent us from doing what we judge to be the right thing?" He saw the spell which he had cast upon his hearers; and smiling, he decided to break it himself. "This all sounds very mysterious and dangerous, but in reality it is not so bad. Our political opponents know what means we have at our disposal as well as we do ourselves, and will take good care not to pick a quarrel with us. Italy may be easy: so long as our hands hold

the shield before the peace of the country no other hand will be raised to disturb it."

"Nevertheless, it would be better if you could stay," said the housewife quietly.

"No, mother," he replied. "The land is tilled: and the next thing is to build the walls. I cannot sow the seed until I am certain that on one will disturb the growing corn." His bright face became gloomy. He concluded: "Into the old Celtic country a primitive nation is thronging, a people overflowing with energy. This very year must decide whether Gaul, since it can no longer remain Gaulish, is to become Germanic or Roman. But a Germanic Gaul would swamp my work before it is completed. That is why I am going up north."

THE CHIEFTAINS

Before the Helvetic envoys stood the Roman commander. His keen glance swept over the thickset figures in their leather jerkins, over which they wore short cuirasses of iron and copper, and considered the heavy weapons and the barbarous warlike adornments whose naive effectiveness was calculated to intimidate the enemy.

He too was armed. Instead of the light, easy toga the heavy lorica encircled his body; at his broad belt hung the short stabbing-sword. His bare arms were set akimbo, his legs slightly straddled. Unconsciously he contracted and relaxed the wiry muscles of his limbs, as though to show the others that his own strength was not to be despised.

The envoys, chieftains of their tribe, understood Latin and spoke it brokenly; so that he needed no interpreter. He spoke slowly and plainly, a word at a time, in order to make his meaning perfectly clear.

"I am sorry that I must refuse your request; as Roman governor I cannot accept the responsibility for the disorder by which the march of such a mass of troops through our province would necessarily be attended."

The Helvetii appeared to be greatly disconcerted. They

quickly exchanged glances and words, and one of them, who did not seem to have understood what was said, received a hasty explanation from his neighbor, and thereafter regarded the Roman commander with the bloodshot stare of an enraged buffalo.

One of the leaders of the embassy, the Helvetian duke Nammeius, made an endeavor to achieve his end by fair words.

"We offer you every possible security, and—"

A wave of the hand silenced him.

"Your securities are of no use to me. All the treasure you possess would not suffice to repair the damage you would do."

"But we pledge ourselves—" began Verocloetius, the second leader of the Helvetii.

"To things you cannot observe.—Spare yourself the pains"— the Roman's tone was not unfriendly, but it was inflexible— "my decision holds good: you cannot pass through our province. And if I may give you a word of advice, it is that you should return to your own country and give up your senseless schemes of emigration."

Then the Gaulish duke lost his temper; the Proconsul's manner of speaking to him drove the blood to the arrogant chieftain's head.

"We hoped, in friendship, to receive your consent," he said haughtily. "Your advice we do not need. If you will not agree to our request we shall carry out our intention by other means. It is not the first time that we have encountered Romans, and I myself was there when the Consul Cassius and his deputy Piso—"

"I know, I know," interrupted Caesar composedly. "I remember your heroic deed; your falling on a Roman division which was not at war with you, and therefore suspected no evil.—Good; try it; try your 'other means'. But I tell you here and now: Unlike Cassius and Piso, I know what I have to expect from you, and am man enough to give anyone who attacks us the reception he deserves."

The chieftain clenched his fists convulsively. All was

silent; only in the background might be heard the whispering of the man who was translating Caesar's words for his neighbor.

Nammeius abruptly moved towards the door.

"Then we have nothing more to say to one another?"

"No."

Without saluting, the envoys left the room. Caesar watched them go, until the last to leave angrily slammed the door. Then he turned to Labienus, who, armed like himself, had been present during the conversation.

"Labienus," he said calmly, "the sentries on the earthworks, and on the lakeside—and especially the outposts on the still standing piles of the bridge—are to be doubled, and the relays of orderlies increased: we have presumably to expect a few assaults in the near future.—Come, I should like to inspect the works."

They left the wooden house which had been promoted to headquarters and went in the direction of the Rhone, rushing swiftly from the lake through which it had flowed. Here was one end of the wall which had been thrown up during the past weeks, which extended to the mountains, closing the end of the valley. Here and there the defences were crowned by the gabions of a hastily improvised redoubt. Beyond the earthworks, dark against the sky of evening, stood the half-demolished wooden bridge over which the bulk of the traffic used to pass.

Passing the legionaries, who interrupted their labors and saluted, resuming their work with pick and spade at the silent gesture of their commander, Caesar looked with contentment on what had been accomplished; the man had worked well.

One of the centurions, who was superintending the diggers, grinned all over his brown, leathery face as his general approached. Caesar looked at him sharply, and stood still.

"I ought to know your face," he said slowly. "What is your name?"

"Crastinus."

"Crastinus?" The name told him nothing. "Have we not met somewhere before?"

"We have!"

"Where and when?"

"Before Mytilene. Under Thermus."

"Before Mytilene!" In a flash the whole scene recurred to Caesar: he saw the narrow sap, the angry, distrustful, derisive soldiers' faces, which suddenly became so solemn. Joyfully he asked: "Then you are surely the louse-catcher?"

The grin developed into a chuckle of infinite delight.

"That's right!"

"I am glad to meet you again! Where have you been all the time?"

"Under Lucullus and Pompeius in Asia. And lately centurion in the Transpadanian legion of recruits."

"In the Tenth? Splendid! And as I see, you have done good work." He pointed to the medals and the chains of honour on the man's lorica.

The centurion's larynx worked up and down: then he suddenly brought out the words:

"That cut on the chin did wonders."

Caesar laughed.

"You still remember that?"

Again the man's larynx worked up and down. Then: "I remember what happened afterwards too."

Caesar waved his hand hastily. "Good.—Well, we shall often see one another now." He held out his hand.

The centurion took it cautiously, as though it had been something indescribably precious and fragile. Then he cried, suddenly:

"Salve, Imperator!"

"Not yet!" smiled Caesar, as he moved on. "But I accept the omen!"

The centurion gazed after him with eyes that were, as of old, like those of a faithful hound. Then, in order to master his emotion, he roared terribly at an unfortunate recruit who had been idly watching the scene.

Caesar, continuing his rounds, observed casually to Labienus:

"If our men are any good at all the Helvetii won't get through this."

"And there is no other way," said Labienus.

"Yes: through the narrows of the Rhone."

"That leads through the territory of the Sequani and is easily closed."

"What does that signify?"

Labienus did not understand him.

"What do you mean?"

"They will gain nothing by using force," Caesar explained.

"But it might be possible to employ more amiable means."

"Do you think so? With the two tribes at enmity?"

"And what if they are mutually reconciled? What if they scent the common enemy and accordingly adjourn their disputes? What if they have already found a mediator who has explained to them the necessity of a common action?"

Labienus stood still.

"Caesar," he cried excitedly, "you have received information?"

"I have received information. And what is more, of the highest importance."

"There have been negotiations?"

"Of a very serious nature. The Helvetii, suspecting my refusal, have taken their measures betimes."

"And who is this mediator?"

"The brother of our Gaulish friend."

"Of Divitiacus?"

"Yes."

"That is treachery!" cried Labienus angrily.

"Why use such strong words?" said Caesar, quietly. "I too am about to take my preventive measures."

"Yes," cried Labienus eagerly: "that must be done immediately! I will send a division at once to the entrance of the pass—"

"That you will not," said Caesar, quickly interrupting him. "On the contrary, I most particularly wish the negotiations to be successful."

"What?"

"If we provoke a battle on the territory of the Sequani, on free Gaelic soil, we shall be the invaders, and we shall give our enemies in Rome a handle to use against us."

"But in the meanwhile the Helvetii are escaping us!"

"And overrunning and plundering the country bordering that of the Sequani, the territory of the Aedui, who will naturally appeal to us for help." Labienus stared at him with open mouth, which gradually expanded in a broad, comprehending smile. "Do you understand now? We shall ensure what is a matter of life and death to Rome—the invasion of Gaul—and this in a perfectly legal, irreproachable manner."

"But how shall we get the troops there in time?"

"Labienus!" Caesar shook his head reproachfully. "When we have the splendid military roads of the province!"

Labienus clapped his open hand to his forehead.

"You are right!—Hullo, what is amiss there?" The alarm was sounding from all directions; the soldiers flung down their picks and spades in feverish haste and buckled on their armor. In a few minutes the wall was strongly manned.

Caesar looked out over the lake, where a broad, heavy boat, glittering with weapons, was slowly approaching.

"The beginning of the comedy," he said casually, replying to a question from Labienus. "We will play our part. Now to our places!" And followed by his lieutenant, he climbed the slope to the top of the wall.

BIBRACTE

For weeks Caesar had been following the Helvetii, always in touch with them, and involved in slight skirmishes daily, but never able to force them to give battle on favorable ground. Once, at the crossing of a river, he succeeded in dealing them a blow; but they avenged the reverse a few days later in a cavalry engagement with Caesar's Aeduic

auxiliaries; while another time an admirably laid ambush miscarried through the incapacity of an officer who had been warmly recommended by Crassus. It seemed as though it would never come to a battle.

Then there were difficulties of commissariat. So long as the march of the troops followed the course of the great river supplies could be towed in barges; but the Helvetii left the river, and Caesar must perforce follow them. And the Aedui, who had appealed to Rome for assistance, were strangely cold and aloof now that the Romans were in their country. The promised supplies of corn did not arrive; Caesar's insistence was met by embarrassed excuses and mendacious evasions; a hand seemed to be at work which mysteriously anulled all his preparations.

Presently he identified this hand: it was that of Dumnorix, the brother of Divitiacus, a wealthy young noble of the tribe of the Aedui; he it was who had acted as mediator between the Helvetii and the Sequani; he it was who had led the Aeduic contingent when the Helvetic cavalry charged the Romans; and it was probably he who had constantly betrayed Caesar's plans and intentions to the enemy. So far Caesar could prove nothing against the man; he still had every reason to hold his hand, but he kept a watchful eye on the suspect.

Finally, tired of the unending performance, he turned off towards the adjacent town of Bibracte, one of the great granaries of Gaul; above all things he wanted to rest his troops, who had by now increased to six legions. The slowly retreating enemy could easily be overtaken later.

But the Helvetii misinterpreted his intentions; what was really a measure of necessity appeared to them as a retreat. They drew their own conclusions: hardly had the Roman column swerved aside than they faced about and proceeded to attack.

It was a scorching summer morning, and the underfed troops, exhausted by long marching, were not in the best fettle. Consequently the news that the desultory rearguard

action was beginning to develop into a furious encounter was a most unpleasant surprise. Caesar was only just in time to throw the cavalry between the assailants and his own troops, in order that he might deploy his handful of legionaries.

He realized at once that he was in a most unfavourable situation. The absence of a camp to the rear—the difficulties of disposing his troops on the nearest undulations of the hilly ground—the possible unreliability of his inexperienced recruits—for all these reasons he would have preferred to avoid giving battle, but he had no choice; if he evaded the enemy now the laborious work of twenty years would be irrevocably lost. Here he must stake everything; he must leave his first battlefield as victor—or not at all. Quickly he sprang from the saddle, and signed to the nearest horse-boy to lead his horse away. For it had come to this: in this first battle of his he must fight in the foremost rank; if he asked his men to give their blood and their lives he must first hazard his own.

He looked about him. His morbidly acute senses were perfectly aware of the dispirited mood of the troops, now arrayed in columns of squares. It was fortunate that he could rely on the officers, who were all experienced veterans. With an iron grip they held the lines together; the men stood their ground; their faces were pale and excited—but they stood their ground.

Now he must give them the stimulus that would bring them through the excitement of the first clash. Slowly he drew himself up to his full height, and filled his lungs with air. His blood seemed to be surging with redoubled force through his arteries. Like a breaking wave it swept over his face; in his ears was a thundering, deafening melody. For a moment he stood motionless, his blazing eyes fixed on the approaching masses of the enemy; then his rigidity relaxed in a sudden wild gesture; the sword in his hand flashed like a darting, glittering snake, and his clear, pealing voice irresistibly drew the whole front after him:

"Follow me!"

A blowing of horns, a yelling of many voices, then a sound of crashing and breaking and hammering. The foes had met.

* * * * *

Night had fallen; a warm July night after the sultry day. A profound stillness prevailed, broken only from time to time by the challenge of the sentries. The flames of torches waved like blazing pennons, lighting a scene of misery and destruction; in certain places there were whole heaps of corpses, lying with clenched fists and glazed, staring eyes, their bodies mangled by terrible wounds; the wounded, panting, groaning, whimpering, painfully dragged themselves along with their last failing strength, looking, in their armour, like gigantic crabs, or lay helpless, begging for a drink of water or a merciful death-blow; here were the smouldering remnants of the barricade of waggons, which after a last desperate struggle had been stormed, broken up and fired; and yonder were crowds of prisoners, mostly women and children, who had accepted their fate with rigid composure.

Caesar, accompanied by Labienus and Publius, the second son of Crassus, was making a last round; passing friend and enemy, inspecting open and bandaged wounds, reviewing the living and the dead. Now and again he bent over one of the gigantic figures that lay on every hand, as though asleep, on the ground.

"Not one of them has a wound in the back," he said, solemnly. Labienus made no reply; he was walking with a coquettish, self-satisfied wagging of his hips, a cruel expression on his finely-chiselled, sensually curved lips. He looked as though he had been drinking of the blood that had flowed in streams that day. Publius Crassus murmured something about "hot work."

"Hot work, yes," nodded Caesar. "For a time it looked bad."

Labienus opened his beautiful, red, drunken lips.

"Without my change of front the day would have been lost," he said, with a triumphant glance at his general.

Caesar answered his glance. Despite the darkness, he could see the evil light in the green eyes of the man before him. Wolf's eyes, he thought.

"I have much to thank you for, Labienus," he said quietly. "Much indeed. I had, of course, had other intentions; the centre was weakened, and I hoped to break through before the flanking movement had made itself more strongly felt. Then the same thing would have been done—but further to the left."

Labienus listened with a superior smile.

"You would not have got through," he contradicted. "They were just beginning the counter-attack trick; their reserves had come up."

"We will not argue the point," said Caesar, amicably. "Your service was unquestionable."

"Moreover," continued Labienus, despite the faint admonition in Caesar's tone, "at the barricade we had to deal with not one-third but with two-thirds of the enemy forces."

"We will not discuss the matter," said Caesar once more, but now with greater emphasis. "It is easy to be wise after the event." The vertical furrow had appeared between his eyebrows. He turned—rather hastily—to young Crassus. "Publius, tell them in camp that orders will be issued at the tenth hour." Silently he watched the young man as he departed, and then, turning to his lieutenant, he said, in a cold, authoritative tone:

"Labienus, I repeat, your idea was good—and above all you were successful; nevertheless I must urgently request you in future to adhere to my orders and never to undertake diversions on your own initiative—save in the most urgent cases imaginable. Order cannot prevail save where there is only one commander. And in this case I am he."

The handsome face beside him was distorted by a hideous grimace.

"Caesar—"

But Caesar had not finished.

"Also I must request you," he continued, even more coldly, "not to begin controversies with me in the presence of subordinates. I do not permit my measures to be subjected to criticism. It is certainly not my habit to turn against my superiors; but for that reason I demand from my under-strappers"—he spoke the harsh word gratingly—"something that one must really take for granted in every well-bred person: tact."

"Caesar"— Labienus began again.

"For me, the incident is closed." He stooped over a legionary who was vainly struggling to rise, and succeeded in getting the man on to his feet. Holding him up, he cautiously led him step by step towards the camp.

The rest of the way back was covered in silence. Caesar could feel that the impotent fury and wounded vanity of the man beside him were concentrating themselves into an abhorrent dose which Labienus could hardly swallow.

Swallow it down and be done with it! thought Caesar, carefully picking his path in order to avoid uneven ground.—It is better that I show you at once who is the master than that you should grow arrogant and find the curb doubly painful later on. You will thank me yet.—And listening to the angry stamping steps of his companion, he smiled quietly into his cloak.

THE TRAP

The great Gallic Diet was convoked, and assembled with extraordinary speed. From almost every province of Middle Gaul the princes and dukes of the various tribes had hastened thither. Old friends and foes sat together in concord—for a strict public peace was enforced during the general Diet—and together took part in the deliberation.

Caesar, who attended the assembly as a guest of honor, got Divitiacus to point out the more noted leaders. The Aedui, under their duke, Liscus, the official colleague of Divitiacus ("We are just like the Consuls with you," the

latter explained with obvious pride) acted as hosts, received the guests, showed them to their places, and saw to their bodily welfare; the place of honour was given to the old Aulercian prince Camulogenus, whose opinions were apparently received with the greatest respect. Beside him sat Akko, duke of the Treveri, broad and thickset, who listened attentively to the speeches, which he pondered behind his low, bulging forehead; beside him were Cingetorix and Indutiomarus, the one high-bred and rather degenerate, with an expression of weary cruelty on his pale face, and the other thin, sinewy and ruthlessly energetic; Commius, the king of the Atrebates, joined them; and a tall man with the profile of a bird of prey; while Ambiorix, duke of the Eburones—the only delegate from Northern Gaul—showed his furtive, ferret-like face everywhere, speaking now a few words with the Arvernian prince Vercassivelaunus, and now with Moritasgus, the duke of the Senones; joining the deputation which came to congratulate Caesar on his victory over the Helvetii, he silently disappeared. Dumnorix, the brother of Divitiacus, strolled past with a casual greeting, hardly troubling to conceal his hostility to the Romans; and his companions followed his example. Divitiacus named them—Eporedorix, Cotus, Cavarillus and Litavicus—and added, with a sigh, that his brother had unfortunately a bad influence over young men (at a secret sign from Caesar the names were hastily scribbled on Hirtius' tablets). Gobannitio, duke of the Arverni, came to pay his respects, pushing before him a boy of some fifteen years, who all but devoured the Roman general with his glowing eyes ("My nephew Vercingetorix," stammered the duke repeatedly; he had evidently been at pains to learn the words by heart); and there were many, many more, whose names Caesar promptly forgot.

With mingled indifference and interest he considered the assembly. In the four months which he had spent on Gallic soil his judgment of the land and its people had been essentially modified; instead of marching, as he had expected, into a forest wilderness whose inhabitants were half savages,

he had found a settled agricultural country, a highly developed network of roads, towns and villages, trade and industry, and a people whose upper classes at least were able to read and write—in short, a peculiar but respectably developed civilization.

When he reflected that he was to lay hands on this country and rob it of its individuality, of its national soul, he felt something like self-reproach. But he quickly dismissed the feeling; for if he did not take possession of the country the Germani would do so; their hand would be heavier than his, and they would destroy not only the national individuality of Gaul, but its very civilization.

Did they perhaps read his thoughts, divine his plans? They received him with respect; they were not lacking in amiability, which sometimes degenerated into adulation, servility and officiousness; but he felt plainly, in his dealing with most of them, that there was something which they carefully concealed from him; he came up against a wall behind which things were happening to which he had no clue. Divitiacus alone seemed to be an exception; not an hour went by but he declared his utter devotion and extolled in flowery phrases the "Saviour of Gallic liberty." But if anything was calculated to arouse Caesar's attention, it was the perceptible reserve with which these and similar phrases were received by the rest of the nobles. He felt as though he were in a room with heavy silken hangings; they were soft to the touch, and yielded to the pressure of the hand, but no sound from without penetrated them, nor any sound from within.

At last the Diet was at an end. After a solemn final session the greater number of the princess departed with their followers. Only a small party remained behind, and these came to the Roman general for a farewell audience.

Caesar was more distrustful than ever. The hostile glances of Dumnorix, the stubborn silence of Akko, the arrogant bearing of Indutiomarus were more to his liking than their slippery courtesy; it was positively slimy, and reminded him of a snake beslavering its prey. Consequently, when he

received the Gallic magnates he was outwordly careless and amiable, but actually nervous and ill-tempered. And his temper was not improved by the fact that he was in need of sleep; he had spent the last few nights poring over maps and writing-tablets, the despatches brought by couriers and the reports of spies.

The reception was at first purely official in character. The deputation thanked Caesar for his services to Gaul and for his appearance in the Diet, and humbly wished him all success in his future career. Replying, he expressed the hope that their relations would continue to be cordial. There was apparently no more to be said, and he waited for the beginning of the wearisome formalities of farewell.

But suddenly something unexpected occurred; all these tall, bearded fellows began to utter complaining cries, outstretching their hands to him beseechingly. Some of them even threw themselves on their knees, and burst into tears.

Wondering, Caesar asked his regular interpreter, Procillus, what was the meaning of their behavior. He replied that they were imploring him to help them, and if he was unable or unwilling to do so, they begged him, in the name of all the gods at least to say nothing of the step which they had taken, for otherwise they would suffer a terrible end.

Caesar, perplexed by this explanation, made further inquiries, and with some little difficulty learned the cause of the Gauls' lamentations: it was the rule of the Germani which had driven them to despair. Called in by one of the Gallic tribes who were struggling for hegemony, the Suabian soldier-king Ariovist had established himself in Gaul, and the Celts could no longer breathe with his brutal hand at their throats.

Despite his exact knowledge of the state of affairs thus excitedly described, Caesar thought it best to feign complete ignorance. In astonishment he turned to Procillus:

"And what should I do in the matter?"

When his words were interpreted there was a fresh outburst of lamentation from the Gallic nobles. Once more they

raised their imploring hands to Caesar; once more he looked upon quivering lips and tearful eyes.

To him the whole incident was rather repulsive; he did not like men who wept and lamented. He remembered the days when he and his countrymen had attended Milon's course of rhetoric in Rhodes; how they had laughed at the effeminate Greeks, whose eyes so readily filled with tears. Here, in these weatherbeaten giants, he found such weakness doubly repulsive.

"They say," Procillus resumed, "that you alone can help them; after your brilliant victory over the Helvetii Ariovist will beware of invoking your wrath. They beg for your assistance as mediator—and if negotiations prove fruitless, for your protection."

While the interpreter was speaking Caesar watched the face of the leaders; pleading, tearful faces, distorted by desperate anxiety.

Was all this genuine? He had known this people only for a few months, but it had always seemed to him that they bore their cares and their pains with remarkable fortitude. They were said to be masters of dissimulation, experienced in all imaginable evasions, to which they readily resorted when the broad, open highway did not lead direct to the goal.

And suddenly he understood; he saw through the game that they were trying to play with him; he saw the watchfulness in their tear-sodden eyes, the malicious tension of the distorted lips; they had guessed something of his plans, and in setting him upon the Germani they hoped to kill two birds with one stone. The conflict would certainly be a murderous one, and the Gallic troops might be equal to dealing with the exhausted Pyrrhic visitor.

It was all that Caesar could do to suppress a grim smile. If only the too cunning fellows knew how they were playing his own game, how, thinking to destroy him, they were furthering his own aims! Well, it was fox against fox! They should have what they themselves were asking for.

Link by link the chain of his thoughts was fitted together. Before Procillus had finished Caesar's plans were complete.

Not for a moment did his face relax its expression of amiable benevolence. Now he dictated his answer to the request of the leaders:

"Tell them to be of good courage: I myself will take their affairs in hand. Ariovist has had many proofs of my friendship, and he knows my power. I shall certainly be able to presuade him to turn back."

Submissive gestures and noisy expressions of gratitude. In the eyes of all a visible satisfaction, a secret triumph. Slowly, walking backwards, they left the room.

Caesar's face grew tense; his eyes began to glow. The officers of his staff were almost awestruck when they looked at him; in this bronze mask they saw the countenance of a war-god. His eyes ran down the ranks of his lieutenants, and it was as though they shot a glowing spark into each man's heart.

"We break camp at once," he said, in a tone whose dryness was the very antithesis of the eager passion of his features. "Objective: Vesontio, which we must besiege by the evening of the day after tomorrow: it is the key to Gaul."

THE TURN OF FATE

"THE escort is here."

Caesar laid down his reed pen and stood up. His eyes were still glued to the leaf of papyrus; now they tore themselves away and fastened on Aulus Hirtius.

"Yes," he nodded. "I am coming." He donned his mantle and fastened the buckle. "No, no helmet." He pushed his adjutant's hand aside. "It will not come to fighting—it must not." Slowly he left the tent. "How late is it?"

"Hardly three hours."

"Then we still have plenty of time." Suddenly his eyes were full of weariness. "Hirtius," he said, "I am treading a difficult path."

"Caesar—?"

"Yes." He nodded, with emphasis. "This Ariovist is no common man, and I am sorry that I must be his enemy."

"Caesar—?" The questioning voice betrayed an increasing astonishment.

"I have learned what battle is." Caesar seemed to be speaking to himself rather than to Hirtius. "My whole life has been nothing but fighting. But this barbarian is second to none of my adversaries. Only a year ago we concluded a treaty of friendship with him; his annexation of Northern Gaul does not in any way infringe that treaty. I myself, as Roman Consul, set my name to the document. Now I am seeking in vain for a justification of my unprovoked attack upon him. Instead of flatly rejecting my questionable demands, he declares himself ready to negotiate, and proposes the place and time for an interview. If now he asks me by what right I am here, what shall I answer him? Can you tell me that?"

"The right of the conqueror," declared Hirtius.

A pale smile flickered over the careworn features.

"Hirtius," he said, very quietly, his hand on his adjutant's arm, "once for all: I do not like big words. You are young, and therefore a dreamer. To conquer!—One does it, but one does not talk about it. I am no Gallic knight, for whom adventure is an end in itself; my task is a terribly serious one—and terribly prosaic; it is to protect Rome against the assault of a younger and perhaps too powerful adversary. If I do not now drive Ariovist into the Rhine he will drive me into the Padus—perhaps even into the Tiber." Again the faint smile. "Is that a thing I can tell him?"

Hirtius made no reply, he stood beside Caesar with bowed head. The young man was beginning to have a dawning conception of the crushing responsibility which rested on the shoulders of his commander.

Caesar continued, and again it was as though he were speaking to himself:

"And he is not only intelligent; he is valiant; his is that absolute courage which no man worthy of the name can fail

to respect. In Rome I have seldom found it, and then only in combination with stupidity, as in Cato. And he is honourable; he keeps the treaties which he has concluded with me; he still keeps them, though I have long ago broken them. Where shall I find his like in Rome? A pity indeed that I must fight him, that we cannot stand shoulder to shoulder!" He crossed the Praetorium with rapid strides; the bronze plates of his cuirass clinking faintly at every step.

Before reaching the escort he suddenly stopped. "But these are Gauls!" he said, with displeasure. "Why?"

Hirtius waved his hand in apology.

"We have no Roman cavalry, and since—"

A nod from Caesar cut him short. The grey, keen eyes had encountered the glance of the leader of his escort; Dumnorix was looking down from the back of his prancing charger, and his whole expression of barely concealed hatred spoke of approaching triumph.

"Absolutely unreliable," said Caesar, quite careless of the fact that the loudly-spoken words rang over the whole Praetorium. "If Ariovist were to take it into his head to make an attempt to capture me I should be lost." He noted with enjoyment the change in Dumnorix' expression, and continued, looking about him:

"Where are the Tenth?"

"Here!" rang from the wall of Roman troops.

"Which of you can ride? Volunteers forward!"

Ten, twelve, fourteen men forced their way to the front, and stood to attention before their commander.

"Caesar's cavalry," said Caesar, smiling. "But I want more.—Who else can sit a horse? Which of you have ridden horses to water?"

Now the men woke to life; they were nearly all the sons of farmers, and had been used to handling horses from childhood. Almost the whole legion rushed forwards.

"Halt! Halt!" cried Caesar, laughing; the eagerness of his men had restored his good humor. "Enough, more than enough!—The Gauls are to dismount!" he continued. "Fifty

of the Tenth to horse! But quickly!" He had his own white charger brought forward, swung himself into the saddle, and looked on with satisfaction at the exchange of riders, which was quickly effected, with much noise and laughter.

Scarcely a minute had passed before the dismal faces of the Gauls were replaced by fifty ruddy Transpadanian faces, smiling at him over the heads of their mounts; he nodded contentedly. "And now forward!" He turned, and rode down the main street to the outer gate.

But once out on the plain his good humour vanished, giving way to his former mood of depression. For the first time in his life he was conscious of a cleavage in his inward self; what he had done hitherto had seemed to him so natural and logical that he had wasted no thoughts on the justification of his actions; even when he entered upon free Gallic territory he had felt only that he was the man entrusted with the task of erecting the bulwark behind which the Roman civilization would reach its highest mark; but now, in this hour heavy with fateful decision, his task no longer seemed so exclusively justified; he had a premonition that forces of a special nature were opposing him; that here a mighty and unspoiled people was preparing to enter upon its historical mission. Ought he to put obstacles in its way? Was he not on the point of perpetrating a great injustice, whose results were beyond his computation, and might affect countless generations? Was he really in the right place—was he helping to build the mighty bridge of which he was destined to become a pier?

These were questions which made his head whirl, but he asked them of the void, and the void returned no answer: he must go his own way, right or left, and he must find it for himself. He felt inwardly broken, groping his way wearily back to firmly established principles. You are a Roman, he told himself, and therefore you are capable of thinking and acting only as a Roman. For you, your country must be above all else. That is good which is of service to Rome; that is bad which injures Rome. This is no question of idle

glory, nor of a mere enlargement of the frontiers of the empire; it is a matter of safeguarding the very existence of Rome. To this goal you must direct your gaze, toward this you must strive with all your strength. What does it matter to you whether the road winds, if only you reach the goal?

A little comforted by these thoughts, he gazed ahead with a lighter heart. He hoped faintly that it might be possible to come to an agreement with Ariovist; that it would not be necessary to clench his hand to a smiting fist, but that it might clasp the other's hand in friendship. What if he should succeed in winning the friendship of the Germani, in making them a part of that civilization whose completion semed to him the final aim of history? He resolved to be indulgent in his demands, and to strive for an understanding. Let Ariovist retain his portion of Gaul, as Caesar would retain his. Bonds would be woven between man and man, between people and people. There was only one thing to be guarded against; the influx of this young nation must not swell into a tide which would finally break through the dam; this was the equilibrium of opposing forces which he must seek to establish, and once this was established there would be no further cause of enmity between them.

The hill to which he was riding was now close at hand, towering suddenly from the plain. Startled out of his pondering, he saw the slope rising steeply before his horse's hooves. He glanced up the rise, and there, on the summit, huge as an equestrian statue, the motionless figure of the Germanic prince stood out against the sky.

THE PATH TO THE LEFT

Caius Caesar to Marcus Crassus, health and greeting!

I hope you are in the best of health, as I am.

Now that I have set down this phrase on the papyrus, this phrase so often thoughtlessly written, I become fully aware how very nearly it might have been a lie. Difficult days lie behind me, and there was more than one moment when I believed that all was lost.

You will of course hear the official report read in the Senate. Do not believe it. It makes the best of things, and it does not convey the whole truth of the situation; for the whole truth would merely give our adversaries in the Curia the opportunity of setting fresh obstacles in our path. There is something fine about humanity so soon as one can employ it for political ends!

For truly: if I had allowed myself to be guided by false sentimentality in my dealings with the Germani, I should not be where I am today. I can very well imagine that hypercritical jurists would describe my mode of procedure as irresponsible, and even criminal. But right or wrong, I had no choice, and, when I once recognized that, I did simply what was necessary, without troubling in the least as to what someone might at some time say about it.

I will not trouble you with a lengthy description of the military operations. It is enough to state that they were beyond expectation successful; that the whole great Germanic army of invasion is sunk in the waters of the Rhine, and that Rome has no more to fear in that direction for some considerable time. Here again, indeed, it was my good star that upheld me, and (I am happy to be able to tell you) the services of your son Publius, who, in an eminently critical situation—the Germani, whom we had thrown back on their right wing, were thrusting furiously forward with the left—by his intervention, on his own initiative, saved the situation, and, really, the day.

But enough of this, as I have said; all the more inasmuch as you will be able to learn as many particulars as you may desire from officers on leave, and above all from the bearer of this letter, the son of our old friend Caburus. I have more important things to tell you.

The diplomatic game of cat and mouse between Ariovist and myself, described in my earlier letters, led finally to a parley which I was perfectly resolved should have decisive results. Foolishly enough, I went with the intention of arranging a settlement if this was anyhow possible, of binding the

barbarian by some sort of alliance. I was in a yielding mood, and today I am thankful that I did not give way to it, or today Gaul would have had two masters—and tomorrow, perhaps, only one, and that one not myself. This was clear to me from Ariovist's first words, from which I realized that for him there could be no talk of giving way, and from that moment I was resolved to fall upon the enemy with all the means at my disposal.

One circumstance confirmed me yet further in this resolve; a casual remark of the chieftain's, which he instantly regretted. He said that he had heard from the ruling circles in Rome that my death (literally!) would assure him of universal gratitude. If this was not empty bragging—and I do not think it was—we have here absolute proof of the alliance of certain senatorial circles with the enemy. I feel myself that the Cicero-Catulus group are chiefly concerned, since they honour me with their especial hatred. In any case I beg you to make investigations.

The conversation, therefore, though hardly begun, had lost all value for me, and I let it drag on simply because my opponent, with the most perfect adroitness, contrived to make any unfriendly conclusion impossible. Fortunately his escort, more impatient than their leader, and spoiling for a fight, began to bombard my own with stones, giving me, at last, the desired pretext for withdrawal: outwardly highly indignant, but inwardly rejoicing: the *casus belli* was given, and I took advantage of the opportunity of flatly rejecting all further proposals to negotiate, however seriously they might have been meant.

How deeply Ariovist felt the miscarriage of his intentions was shown by the cruel treatment of such of our agents as he captured. Caburus' son, who was among them, was three times on the very point of being burned alive, and as a result of his physical and mental sufferings is so broken down that he will have to go on prolonged sick-leave. All this, of which I naturally learned at once, impelled me to attack with the

utmost vigor, and since at last the German chieftain recognized the futility of his efforts it came to a battle.

The progress of the battle, and its result, I have already briefly described. The sacrifices, of course, are in proportion to that result. If I were not at present in an impregnable fortress any Gallic tribe of moderate strength could make an end of me and my men, so exhausted are we all. The troops will retire, as soon as they have recovered their breath, directly to their cantonments, which I have had prepared in the district formerly occupied by Ariovist, in the territory of the Sequani.

And now I come to the decisive point of my letter, and I beg you, and Pompeius also, to give your closest attention to what follows.

By the two campaigns of this summer I have become the actual master of Gaul, and I so propose to remain. Vesontio, the key to the country, will not again leave my hand; and within two years at most the whole great Gallic peninsula, to the shores of the ocean, must become a Roman province. That this will cost further heavy battles goes without saying; but I shall win those battles. What I need above all is troops to cover my rear. I beg you, therefore, to obtain at any cost, from the Senate, or if the Senate makes any difficulties, from the popular assembly, the supplementary sanction for my proceedings, and to contrive that I have a free hand for the future. This is the last great opportunity of stopping the gap in the north-west—that in the south-east, the Parthian gap, will also have to be considered. This opportunity must not be jeopardized by the jealous and mercenary spirit which lurks behind all the sentimentality of Cato and his fellows. If another had solved this problem before me I should be content; but since the solving of it has developed upon me I propose to solve it so thoroughly that there will be nothing left for my successors to do. I am fortunate in that your powerful support has made it possible for me to achieve this end, and I beg you to continue your help and support.

Since I do not wish to withdraw too far from the newly-

acquired areas, I shall winter in Transpadana. In the coming spring I intend first of all to push westward to the ocean, and then, in two simultaneous operations, to pacify the North and the South-west. If I succeed in this, we shall have created the bulwark which should safeguard Rome from any peril.—Farewell!

THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

It was the second spring on Gallic soil.

Caesar was hardly able to await its coming; barely had the ice of the streams and rivers thawed, barely had the first flowers appeared, when he left Transpadana. He crossed the Alps while they were still deep in snow, and appeared in Vesontio before anyone suspected his advent, startling the troops, who were enjoying their comfortable winter quarters. In six days all the six legions were assembled at headquarters, and with them the two fresh legions which Caesar had brought with him.

Even before the last incoming detachments were allotted to their units Caesar had set to work with feverish activity. It was as though a whirlwind had seized him and was carrying him away. He made no attempt to oppose it, but flung himself with outspread arms into the storm, letting it bear him onward in a species of intoxication. The merciless rhythm of his activities gave his troops no time to draw breath, and himself no time for reflection; gone were the doubts and scruples which had so often hindered and restricted him a year ago; he fell upon the country as a beast of prey falls upon its victim.

His original plan he was indeed unable to carry out: messenger after messenger had reached his headquarters during the winter with news that in the free North, where but few Roman traders had ever ventured, and no Roman soldier, a storm was gathering with the intent to deal his overlordship a shattering blow. The tribes were allied in a confederation at whose head were the Nervii, "the bravest of the brave." Unless he could steal a march upon them the waves of the

spring spate would foam over the weak dam which he had only just begun to build.

Caesar, accustomed to adapt himself to the situation, did not hesitate for a moment. The conquest of the West must wait: in the North lay the solution. He gathered the eagles of the eight legions about his standard and stormed out of the secure Vesontio, which he had converted into the chief Roman arsenal. His eyes blazed, and the savage lust of battle was burning in his heart. In thoughtless exaltation, under the spell of his will, the troops followed the nervously dancing feet of his charge into the heart of the hostile country. Here were low-lying plains, crossed in all directions by endlessly long and impenetrable hedges, higher than a man, through which the legions laboriously made their way; by slow marches, prepared at any moment for a battle, Caesar pushed on through the marshy land toward the Sabis, where the enemy was concentrated.

Three days they marched through a pathless country, in which every step had to be wrested from the unwilling land; worn out by their previous efforts, the troops were all but exhausted, and their nerve was completely shaken by their unrelaxing anxiety. Taciturn and menacing, on either hand rose monstrous forests, full of mysterious sounds whose origin remained unknown to them. Not a living creature was to be seen: only once or twice the skirmishers of the vanguard caught sight in the far distance of figures that seemed to be human, horsemen mounted on shaggy little horses, who immediately withdrew into the impenetrable undergrowth. But otherwise, nothing. It was a march through a country bewitched, that offered abundant fare to every fearful superstition. The soldiers looked for consolation and encouragement at the faces of their officers; but only to see the same harassed expression, the same fiercely restless eyes, looking for the enemy with absolute longing, for action would at least make an end of the torture of uncertainty.

On the third day one of the patrols returned with the report that the river was close at hand. On the following

day the army broke ranks in order to encamp itself securely by the riverside. A sigh of profound relief passed through the ranks of the exhausted troops. The Sixth Legion of veterans, who constituted the main body of the marching columns, made haste to the river, and had no sooner reached the bank than they began to throw up intrenchments. Two or three enemy scouts appeared on the farther shore, and disappeared again. No one troubled about them; scouts were for the cavalry to deal with. And even they were taking things easily; many of the men had dismounted, and were leading their thirsty horses to drink, loosening saddle-girth and bridle. Yet another two hours, and the comfortable feeling of being in security behind strong walls would take possession of every heart.

Then, suddenly, a long-drawn, shrieking whistle; and all was confusion along the bank, as javelins and arrows rained upon the men. There were shouts of alarm, and the screams of wounded men, and the desperate confusion of unthinking panic. The edge of the forest beyond the river was suddenly black with gigantic, shaggy figures. They tore down the sloping bank, waded the shallow stream; reaching the hither side, they flung themselves upon the cavalry, who were scattered in a moment, and swept up the hill to the camp that had barely been begun. This was all the work of seconds.

The alarm was sounded, and the rally. The men dropped pick and spade, caught up their shields, and sought their divisions, not waiting to don their helmets. Where a man saw the pennon of a cohort he joined that cohort, fell into the ranks, hurled his spear, without waiting for the word of command, at the onrushing mass of the enemy, tore his sword from its scabbard, and the next moment was face to face with the bloodthirsty foe.

Caesar, always prepared for unexpected attacks, did not for a moment lose his head. In quick, nervous flashes his eyes ran over the troops.

In the Tenth, beside which he was standing, order had been quickly restored, and also in the Ninth; they allowed

the disorderly troops of the enemy to approach within striking distance, and then, leaping forward upon the now breathlessly panting Gauls, they drove them back with irresistible impact, inextricably mingled with them as they fled downhill and across the river, and up the opposite bank, disappearing with them into the forest.

Forward!

The Eleventh and the Eighth likewise had hurled the enemy back in a counter-attack; on the bank the mêlée came to a standstill, and resolved itself into a bewildering, sprawling, convulsive confusion, as though a nest of gigantic ants had been overturned.

Caesar had no time to spare for them; another part of the line claimed all his attention; the forward rush of the two bodies of troops had left a gap, and the front and flanks of the camp were completely denuded, so that the Seventh and Twelfth, who were still in the camp, were in a dangerous position. This the enemy had realized, and a section of the assailants proceeded to complete the enveloping movement. The cavalry had barely rallied when they were again dispersed in senseless panic; on the ridge of the hill the baggage-waggons were jammed together; there were shouts of despair, and curses, and cries for help—and above all the long-drawn signal-whistles of the Gauls and the savage, drunken scream of victory. Before he knew how he got there, Caesar was in the midst of the two legions, now huddled together in a desperate defence. Their position was well-nigh hopeless; the fourth cohort of the Twelfth had lost its officers, the colours were captured, and the survivors, a trembling handful, were reduced to a purely instinctive self-defence. In the other cohorts also the centurions were either slain or severely wounded; the senior in rank, Baculus, whom he had long known and valued, had propped his shield before him with his left hand, and was with difficulty supporting himself on it; his head, and the woollen shirt beneath his leather jerkin, were red with blood; he could hardly keep on his feet, but his right hand, grasping the short broadsword, which like him-

self was dripping with blood, was delivering thrust upon thrust, with a force and rapidity that spoke of the experienced fighter. (Grave old fellow! thought Caesar). Yet he was almost the only man who was still standing his ground; under the furious attack from three sides the front was beginning to waver; a few cowards in the rear were giving up the fight and beginning to run: the catastrophe was at hand!

No! With a leap, he intercepted one of the fugitives, tore the shield from his grasp, and forced his way to the front. "Courage, men, here I am!" He felt as though he could hold the crumbling front single-handed, and the virtue in him was communicated to his men. They saw their leader fling himself into the thick of the assailants, and blindly they followed him.

The sudden attack brought the enemy to a standstill; only for a moment, but Caesar made the most of that moment. The intervals between the divisions were closed, and something like order reëstablished. A prompt command brought up the Seventh; they stood back to back with the Twelfth, and the renewed assault was checked on every side by a bristling wall of sword-points.

And now, as though the heavenly powers had only waited for these men, already doomed to death, to help themselves, the miracle occurred; on the ridge appeared the two legions of recruits, and almost simultaneously the Tenth, recrossing the river, stormed up the bank. This fired the courage of the hard-pressed troops; wounded men staggered to their feet, and holding their swords before them as though blinded, tottered back into the fray; unarmed horse-boys flung themselves on adversaries who were armed to the teeth; the cavalry, once more rallied together, tried to atone for their previous failure, and seemed to be everywhere at once; in a trice the situation was transformed; the enemy, who but a moment before had been victoriously pressing forward, were attacked on both sides, surrounded and penned in; five legions and the whole of the cavalry fell upon them.

But they did not give ground; with certain destruction

staring them in the face, they met the terrible assault with desperate courage. Their front ranks fell; those behind them leapt on the bodies of the fallen, hurled their javelins at their assailants, snatched up the spears thrown by the Romans, and hurled them back, defended themselves with their swords, and when these were shattered, with their naked fists, with their teeth and nails. At length only a few were left, standing on the heaps of the slain, towering high over the turmoil. The Gallic interpreters, obeying Caesar's orders, summoned them to surrender, and promised them honorable captivity. Then at last their arms fell; they cast away their swords, and climbed down from the piled heaps of corpses, terrible and magnificent even in their defencelessness.

From one of them Caesar learned that they were men of the race of the Nervii. Deeply impressed, the Proconsul took the remnant of the heroic people under his personal protection. He drew a deep breath; for he knew that now this people was conquered there were none others that could withstand him: Gaul was his.

CRASSUS

"My little Caesar"—with manifest delight Crassus used the old affectionate diminutive, as he slipped his arm into that of his younger friend—"I am glad indeed to see you again. How long is it since we were last together? Three years, is it not?"

Caesar's slender hand, all bone and sinew, grasped the fleshy paw resting on his forearm, and squeezed it affectionately.

"It is good of you, old friend," he said, cordially. "Three years, yes. I too am glad. How are things going with you?"

The financier's face, which was fatter than ever, promptly assumed an expression of profound anxiety. Slowly he shook his massive head.

"Not so well as with you," he wheezed asthmatically. "You at least are your own master; you can do and leave undone what you will, and no one says a word to you. But in Rome

all is topsy-turvy, and Pompeius is not the man to deal with the dogs."

"I know," Caesar nodded. "Thanks to your reports I am well informed."

"You are," snorted Crassus, "if you knew how to read between the lines. I could not always write as I felt." He halted, as always when at all excited, and lifted his chin from his breast. "For years," he said, in his deep, organ-like bass, "I have been waiting for the moment when I should be able to say all that is in my heart."

Once more Caesar pressed the tremendous paws.

"The moment has come," he said. "Speak out."

The massive chin sank on to the mighty breast. Crassus fell into profound meditation.

"I simply don't know where to begin," he muttered. "There is a very Gordian knot of complications, in which it is impossible to find a beginning or an end."

"We will follow the example of the great Alexander," said Caesar, smiling, "and cut it cleanly across. Let us make a beginning: Pompeius, you say, is not equal to his task?"

"Absolutely not," affirmed Crassus, bitterly. "He has shewn himself to be just as incapable as was to be expected.—Man!"—he drew his hand from Caesar's, and laid it on his friend's shoulder: "think what Pompeius could have done in the position which we created for him! The Senate muzzled; the popular assembly on our side; every second man one of his veterans—an invisible army, so to speak, which could be set in motion at a word!"

"Why did he not speak the word?"

"How do I know?" A contemptuous wave of the hand. "Because his courage failed him! Because he had not sufficient confidence to act consistently and to dictate his will. Instead of this he—Pompeius Magnus, the laurel-crowned conqueror of the pirates and Mithridates—" he scornfully spat out the words—"set himself at the head of a rabble and fought the gangs of Clodius—and what is worse, allowed himself to be beaten."

"Yes," nodded Caesar. "Clodius is growing too arrogant!"

"Arrogant?" cried Crassus, angrily. "Shameless! Insolent! The fellow has taken it into his head that he is a little Gracchus, and if we look on and say nothing he will sooner or later try to make himself dictator! And the gods alone know what would happen then!"

A faint smile was on Caesar's lips.

"Clodius is bound hand and foot," he said calmly, "and will do nothing that could seriously inconvenience us."

Crassus gazed at his confident friend dumbfounded.

"He is even attacking you!" he cried. "He declares that all your laws are unconstitutional, that they were not instituted by the proper methods!"

"I know, I know," nodded Caesar, smiling more broadly. "I will have him come to Lucca one day, in order to give him a piece of my mind. In the meantime, since Cicero has been recalled, he shall curb Clodius for me."

"Cicero!" Crassus was speaking with increasing warmth. "There was another mistaken measure. Confronted by Pompeius' impotence, his humility has vanished like snow in the spring sunshine. His very entry into Rome was like a triumph, and since his return the opposition in the Senate is gaining in strength day by day. They are all in the same boat. Do you know what happened in the last session before I left Rome? Cicero proposed that the distribution of land in the Campagna effected during your Consulate shall be restored to the agenda!"

Caesar frowned slightly, but this was the only sign that he was fully aware of the significance of the incident. Apart from the slight knitting of his brows, his expression was still calm and even cheerful.

"Then I will send for Cicero too," he said nonchalently.

Crassus was not listening; he was still so occupied with his own thoughts.

"And now, the worst of all," he continued, unconsciously lowering his voice. "The senatorial party are casting their nets for Pompeius too. You must have an unknown enemy,

and one of unprecedented ability. I am conscious—" he sought for the fitting words—"I am conscious of a concentration of the hostile forces, an organized resistance, whose influence is daily increasing. Cato, Bibulus, Domitius, Catulus and all their supporters are working into one another's hands, as would only be possible after a definite and well-considered plan. Have you any suspicion where the nucleus of this plot may be?"

Caesar had a suspicion: an instinctive certainty. But he did not utter it: he listened in silence to Crassus as the latter continued:

"If Junius Brutus were still alive I should begin to look in that direction; but his widow confines herself to training her son in the old Roman virtues, with the assistance of Cato and company." He did not mark the faint pallor on Caesar's cheeks, nor the painful recognition in his friend's eyes that his guess had been correct. Like the victim of a fixed idea, he returned to the starting-point, to Pompeius, whose rise to power and outward magnificence were more than his jealousy could forgive. "And Pompeius is deliberately walking into their trap. No wonder that the senatorial flock have such swollen combs; he has made it too easy for them."

Now it was Caesar who took Crassus by the arm.

"Don't worry about that, Crassus," he said drily. "We shall cut their combs again."

"And cut them close, I hope," boomed Crassus. "They have all become so arrogant they don't know what to be at.—For example, some old woman is supposed to have seen a sign in the heavens—a comet or what not. For the Senate that is sufficient excuse for requesting two Etruscan astrologers to interpret the sign; and they gave, of course, the desired opinion, that the sign meant nothing less than a threat to the Republic from an ambitious citizen. . . Do you begin to see?"

Caesar broke into a ringing laugh, and pressed Crassus' arm against his side.

"Now shake out the bag!" he said, still laughing. "I can see that you have still something on your mind."

The banker nodded, angrily protruding his lower lip. "Do you know who is the consular candidate for the coming year? The closest friend of Cato and Bibulus: Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus."

Caesar's smile vanished instantly; his expression was cold and angry. "Nonsense," he said, in a harsh, brutal tone. "The Consuls for the coming year as Crassus and Pompeius."

LUCCA

THE little country town was full almost to overflowing, and its inhabitants, who had hitherto led a peaceful and obscure existence, felt suddenly that they were the hub of the world; that the world was contained within their walls. Every man of them had the feeling that he was in some way taking part in the deliberations and resolutions of their rulers, and the most innocent townsman went about his business looking as though he were guarding the profoundest State secrets. They no longer turned round to stare at a simple senator; they were too used to the sight of them, for no fewer than two hundred members of this august body were staying in the town; and among them was almost every Roman of rank and reputation. Even Cicero himself, still the hero of the opposition, had hastily set out for Lucca as soon as he heard of the meeting of the three mighty ones, and he had not stirred from the town since, although he had to share a living-room with his deadly enemy, Clodius.

Every moment some high official of the State went by, in solemn and self-conscious composure, preceded by the lictors bearing the axe in the bundle of rods; dust-covered despatch-riders galloped in through the gates on thin jaded horses, leapt from their exhausted mounts, and hurried, on stiff, saddle-sore legs, into the townhall, where the deliberations were proceeding. Others came hastily out, shouted for their horses, and rode off blaspheming; swarms of white, black and yellow lackeys stood idly and arrogantly about the mar-

ket-place and the streets, waking to life only when one of Caesar's escort, or some soldier of the Tenth, roughly accosted them or pushed them aside.

The Tenth were the masters of the town. "Caesar's guard," they called themselves, and "Caesar's cavalry" (for these were the men to whom he trusted himself when he went to meet Ariovist). Fifty of them the Imperator had brought; all bold, sunburned fellows with dazzlingly white teeth, and all, despite their youth, decorated, and most of them with the scars of recent wounds. Of an evening they made all the taverns unsafe; swaggering and boasting of their doings at Bibracte, in the Rhineland, and on the Sabis. Now and again they would hold a mighty carouse, ending in a regular battle with the jealous lads of the town; and the next morning their centurion would curse them until they forgot their headaches. But on the following evening they appeared again, careless and perfectly pleased with themselves, roaring their none too chaste soldiers' songs with more vigor than art, picking quarrels with the townsmen and kissing all the girls on whom they could lay their hands.

In the antechambers and offices there was a constant coming and going, a continual hum of voices. Whosoever had a request to make, a petition to submit, had to come to Lucca, and the host of slaves and scribes and secretaries prospered exceedingly. Many a hand was furtively hollowed in order to receive the softly-clicking coins that were earned so easily by opening a side door and allowing a favored suitor to slip through. From time to time the heated countenance of Aulus Hirtius was visible, the nervous, scholarly head of Asinius Pollio, or the statuesque beauty of Mamurra, concerning whom scandalous rumors were current. They were surrounded at once, but waved the suitors away, Hirtius breathlessly, Pollio with smooth and slippery politeness, Mamurra with marmoreal impassivity: "Later! Later!"

In the innermost and least accessible room of the house, hermetically sealed from the outer world, sat the three great men: Crassus, whose enormous person overflowed his arm-

chair, Pompeius, whose thin, solemn face had acquired a look of decision during the course of the deliberations, and Caesar, small and slight, whose negligent bearing betrayed nothing of his extreme nervous tension.

The conference was nearing its conclusion. Those waiting without could not know how difficult it often was to reconcile opposing claims, to find at last a formula which should appear acceptable to both the rivals—Pompeius and Crassus. It took all Caesar's ingenuity and energy—and all his patience—to effect a profitable settlement, to make these two refractory gamecocks follow a course which was in the interest of all.

They sat round the great table, by which they had sat all night, utterly weary, but with every sense alert; and Caesar even proceeded to summarize once more the points of the settlement.

All three had before them tablets covered with closely-written notes, on which their eyes were fastened; Caesar was further provided with a heap of sheets of papyrus, to which he referred from time to time.

"We are, then, agreed," he began, in a clear, deliberate voice. "You two take over the Consulate for the next year. After your term of office Pomepius receives the province of Spain, and Crassus the province of Syria, with full administrative and military authority. The recruiting of the troops required will begin immediately. The period of your command will be five years, reckoning from the close of your Consulate." Pompey and Crassus, each grasping his stylus, smoothed out, with the butt end, certain details inscribed on their wax tablets. Caesar, with a pencil of lead, made a few brief notes on his sheets of papyrus, and continued:

"At the same time, I retain Gaul for another five years. You will guarantee the gradual increase of my legions to ten, and the maintenance of such troops as I have recruited myself will be assumed by the State. On the expiration of the term of my command I receive the Consulate a second time."

Once more he compared his tablets of notes with the papyrus pages, and looked up.

"That is all—in rough outline. Has either of your any proposal to make, any desire to express, any questions to ask?"

"Clodius," said Pompeius, irritably.

"Clodius will keep quiet," replied Caesar. "Since I have bought up all his debts he is entirely in my hands. Anything else?"

"Cicero," wheezed Crassus, asthmatically.

Caesar bent his head in order to conceal a faint, contemptuous smile; it was characteristic of both men that they put personal matters before all else.

"I have tamed Cicero too," he replied. "Moreover, his brother goes to Gaul on my staff; in that way we make use of him.—Anything further?"

"The Senate," gasped Crassus.

"The Senate will be dealt with as usual. All our arrangements will be proposed in the prescribed manner, and pressed through with the assistance of our party numbers. When this is impossible the appeal will be made to the popular assembly."

"I was just going to speak of that," murmured Pompeius.

"The popular assembly is on our side. Stop the people's mouths with cheap bread, dazzle their senses with splendid festivals and spectacles, and you can get anything you want from the market." He looked round. "Is that all?"

"Yes," said Crassus, in an apoplectic croak.

"Yes," agreed Pompeius, stiffly.

Caesar sat upright, folded his hands, and looked at the two men gravely and steadily.

"My dear friends," he said, and his voice betrayed the fact that he was moved beyond his wont, "now permit me to say a few words. This is no light moment. During the negotiations of the past two days we have come to see two things: that there is nothing upon which we cannot agree if only we discuss it together—and that united we are insuperable. Re-

member that, my friends, as I shall remember it. We based our alliance on a community of interests; but it has become more than that; it is an alliance of friendship. Let me, at this juncture, which finds us three and yet one, express the hope that it will always remain such. Accept from me the most solemn assurance that I will never undertake anything which can injure either of you, and that I am ready to grant any demand which either of you may make, even at the cost of sacrificing my own interests. If you accept this promise, and respond in like manner, there is nothing that can divide us, and, therefore, no one who can resist our will. Divided, we are the tools and playthings of political constellations; united we are the masters of the world and the only free men in the world. Give me your hands and help me to accomplish the task which is laid upon us: to win for all mankind the freedom which we have won for ourselves."

Profoundly moved, he held out his hands. Crassus was the first to grasp one of them; he seized his friend's right hand, struggling to conceal his emotion.

"My little Caesar! My little Caesar!" he murmured again and again. And suddenly, with enthusiasm: "You can rely on me to the death! You know that!"

Caesar answered the pressure of his hand, as well as he could with fingers that seemed to be gripped by an iron vise; then he turned to the left.

"Pompeius?" he said, questioningly.

Cool, limp fingers were laid in Caesar's left hand.

"Of course, of course," said the veiled, hoarse voice, hastily.

Caesar felt a chill creeping up to his heart. His emotion ebbed. He slowly withdrew his hands, and his voice was collected and businesslike when he spoke again:

"Then we will draw up our treaty." His finger touched the suspended gong. Hirtius dashed in; he turned to him, and handed him the uppermost sheet of papyrus, which contained the agreement in abbreviated form, just as he had recapitulated it. "Three copies," he said briefly. "We are waiting."

Hastily as he had come, Hirtius disappeared with the

rough draft. Caesar drew a long breath, and turned to his friends. His heart went out to Crassus, who had not yet recovered from his sudden emotion, but his anxiety in respect of his child impelled him to speak to Pompeius first—though never had he seemed so alien to him as now!

"How is Julia?" he asked.

The haggard face, whose immobility reminded one somehow of an ancestral portrait, suddenly came to life. And for that moment at all events Caesar did not regret that he had given Pompeius his darling.

"Not so well as I could wish," replied Julia's husband with anxious deliberation. "For the last few weeks her cough has returned. I think I shall send her to the Sabine hills."

For a moment anxiety constricted Caesar's throat; then he fought it down, and persuaded himself not to take Pompeius' words too seriously.

"Yes," he said, "the spring air in Rome is poisonous. That is due to the Pontine marshes. The whole district ought to be drained: what an area of agricultural land would be won!" His ever-wakeful intellect, diverted in a moment from his personal cares, began swiftly to operate: "The canal could be taken down to Terracina, and the lower Tiber, at right angles to it, regulated; it could go round the Janiculum to Ostia—"

"Yes, and take down the Capitol, and build it up again in Vesontio," growled Crassus, in good-humored mockery, alluding to Caesar's partiality for the Gallic fortress.

"That is unnecessary," retorted Caesar, laughing. "In Vesontio we have a hill fortress with which the Capitol cannot compare."

"Perhaps I will go with her to Puteoli in August," interrupted Pompeius, who, absorbed in his own thoughts, had not been listening to the conversation.

Caesar's anxiety returned.

"Or to Ariminium," he suggested. "It is, of course, less fashionable than Puteoli, but the air is much better there, and it would be quieter for her."

"At Ariminium," said Crassus, eagerly intervening, "I have a country house. If Julia pleases I shall be delighted to place it at her disposal."

"I thank you," said Pompeius, coldly. "We will hope that there will be no need to trouble you. As far as that goes, the matter need not be taken too seriously." Now it was he who was trying to reassure himself.

Caesar looked into Pompeius' eyes, as Pompeius gazed into his, and each read in the other's eyes his own concealed anxiety, his own secret fear. Crassus looked from one to the other, and sensed an atmosphere of secrecy and sadness.

Hirtius' entrance broke the oppressive silence. Almost greedily each took one of the three identical copies and began eagerly to read it.

Caesar had finished first. He laid the sheet on the table, took his reed pen, and quickly signed his copy, and then the other two, which were passed to him in silence. Then he handed the pen to Pompeius.

TALL STORIES IN GERMANIA

Bell. Gall. VI. 26-28.

The man's fur tunic was shaggy and matted; matted and shaggy were his hair and beard, so that in all this hirsute wilderness the great red nose and the crafty, blinking eyes were barely noticeable.

In the opening of the tent the hilly river landscape was framed; a deeply-cut valley was visible, whose flanks were interrupted by lateral valleys, and down the middle of this valley rolled the broad flood of the Rhine. The swiftly-gliding stream was spanned by the timber framework, at once graceful and energetic, of the great bridge which in ten days Caesar had conjured out of nothing. If for a moment his eyes left the figure of the wild man of the woods it was always to gaze down at the bridge, as though seeking in the unknown for yet another problem—another tessera of the great

mosaic whose outlines were beginning to assume an ever more definite form.

Philinus, the scribe, sat bowed over his pages of notes, breathing quickly and recording in frantic haste the results of Caesar's inquiries; the little curly-haired trader, who was serving as interpreter, waited with exaggerated eagerness for the next question: only the Germanic giant was composed and careless. Caesar's reassuring and encouraging words had put him entirely at his ease; as for answering the numerous and often very singular questions of the Roman commander, that seemed to be affording him some amusement. Again and again the mouth, concealed in the thicket of beard, expanded in a broad smile; again and again, as he spoke of the manners and customs of his nation, the growling bass voice betrayed an amused satisfaction.

Caesar had already put many questions: he had learned that the German belonged to the tribe of the Tenkteres, whose invasion the Roman commander had but lately repelled, driving them back over the Rhine; he had been told of the simple religion of these children of Nature, how they worshipped the Sun-god, the Moon-goddess, and the hammer-wielding Lord of the Thunder; how they made war, and fought to the last man; shaking his head slightly, he had heard how they laid waste the country round the area in which they settled, so that they might meet enemy attacks on the edge of the devastated belt; and he had learned something of their daily life; they were a people who knew little of agriculture, but lived rather by war and the chase.

Here the German became animated. His eyes sparkled; he could hardly find words to describe the tussles which he and his fellows had had with bears and wolves and aurochs.

"Aurochs?" interrupted Caesar. "What sort of an animal is that?"

The giant stared at him in astonishment. Did not the Roman know what an aurochs was? Were there in his country no forests, whose depths might give shelter to the undisputed king of the wilderness? It was only after repeated urging

that he consented to give a description of the beast, which the little trader translated with various embellishments.

"He is like the ox," said the German, describing the monster. "But he is much, much bigger. He is more than a head taller than a man standing upright. No other beast approaches him for strength and speed, and none exceeds him in fierceness. He cannot be captured otherwise than in pitfalls, and even then he is so terrible a beast to attack that more than once the man has got the worst of the encounter. For this reason it is a very glorious thing to have killed him; the whole settlement rejoices when the victor returns from the hunt, and he proudly uses the horns of the beast he has conquered as drinking-goblets at the feast."

A sign from Caesar spurred the scribe on to even more frantic activity. Then, continuing his questions, Caesar asked:

"What other animals have you in Germania?"

"The ren," replied the giant.

"The ren? What is that?"

Once more a sidelong glance of surprise: the Roman seemed to know nothing!

"It is like—well, it is a kind of deer, only the hind has antlers as well as the stag."

"Curious.—Tell me more!"

"The stake-antler—it has a horn like a stake—"

"Do you mean the beast has only one antler?"

The German hesitated, blinked furtively, and suddenly nodded with superfluous emphasis.

"Yes, only one."

"Where does it grow?"

The German's face was perfectly serious, but his eyes were twinkling and dancing.

"It grows out of the middle of his forehead."

"Between the ears?"

"Exactly between the ears."

"Very interesting. Note that, Philinus." The scribe nodded, and Caesar continued:

"And the horn is like a stake, did you say?"

But the German seemed to have lost interest in the stake; he pointed briefly at the widespread fingers of his left hand, as though to indicate that the "stake" was like other antlers, and proceeded, unasked, to describe yet another animal:

"We have elks too."

"Once more, what are they? Elks! Write that down, Philinus.—What do they look like?"

"Like goats. But bigger."

"What color are they? Piebald?"

Again the furtive glance and the suppressed smile.

"Yes, all piebald."

"And have they horns like goats?"

"No: antlers, but broad and quite short."

"Ah! And are they as active as goats?"

The German laughed to himself. Then:

"By no means!" he said. "They have stiff legs."

"What do you mean by that? Legs without joints?"

A suppressed chuckle from the German.

"No joints at all."

"Then they cannot even lie down?"

"No; if once they lie down they can never get up again."

"Then how do they sleep?"

The German could hardly speak for suppressed laughter.

"They lean against the trees."

"Against the trees?"

"Yes; and that is how we catch them."

"How?—This is most interesting!"

The giant, with an effort assumed a perfectly innocent expression, and began to describe the method:

"When we find the slot of an elk we follow the trail until we come to its sleeping-place. There we undermine the trees, or cut them nearly through, so that they just remain standing. The tired elk comes, and does not know that the trees are not intact, and leans against one unsuspiciously. The tree falls over, and the elk with it. Next morning all we have to do is to cut his throat."

The scribe listened with open mouth, and Caesar with breathless interest. He looked consideringly at the German; the fellow seemed full of stories! Whole herds of animals, all equally strange and unknown, began to have a shadowy existence for him. Here was matter for a valuable excursion in the volume of memoirs which he proposed to write, describing his Gallic campaigns. The public was well pleased when the glory of the commander was enhanced by the fame of the explorer. And smiling faintly, Caesar realized that even he was not quite immune to the vanity of the author.

A shadow in the tent-opening: Hirtius had arrived with the post. A pity! Now he would have no more time for the barbarian. Regretfully he swept his eyes over the gigantic figure, which—but why on earth?—was shaking from head to foot with irrepressible laughter.

"You have taught me," said Caesar, amiably, "a great deal that I did not know and should not have believed to be possible. I thank you. You may go: you are free." He watcher the weather-beaten giant as he stamped out of the tent and with hasty strides left the Roman camp. For a moment he wondered why the German had laughed so heartily; but then he turned his thoughts to problems of greater importance—problems of strategic necessities and high politics.

IN THE SMALL HOURS

The weary man started up from his hot, disordered bed. Had not a voice called him?

He listened, every sense on the alert, and waited with palpitating heart.

Nothing.

With a heavy sigh he sank back on his bed, and stared into the velvety blackness of the night. His hands and feet were cold as ice; his head was burning. An iron ring seemed to encircle his temples.

Fever? He felt his pulse.

No. His heart was beating quickly again, with the meas-

ured beat that had never varied through all the years whose sum he called his life. Never as in this hour had he felt the strangeness of it—that while he thought, felt, acted, created, destroyed, rejoiced and suffered, there was something within him which steadily and unerringly pursued its own way, independent of its owner's will, and almost alien to him.

It disquieted and distressed him: for were not he and his heart one? Had it ever before occurred to him to look for a discord here? Had there even been anything to destroy the harmony between them? Why was he aware just now of the contrast between his endlessly hurrying thoughts and the regular and equable beating of the thing within his breast?

He clasped his hands behind his head, and closed his smarting eyes, as though he could compel the sleep that fled him to return.

In vain. More than ever he was conscious of the distress which had come upon him, and to which he was delivered defenceless. The tremor of his limbs, the twitching of his nerves told him how completely he was the prey of the unknown thing which had taken possession of him.

He sought to escape it; for a time he found a refuge in the thought of his daily work: the work of laying the foundations of the mighty task which for him was both instinct and fulfillment. Much lay behind him, infinitely more in front of him. He had done good work; the first year had given him the heart of the country, the second year the North. With a rapidity that even as he remembered it seemed incredible he had taken possession of the land and made himself its master.

But then he had encountered the first delays: the third year had been one of inactivity and fruitless hopes. Here too, indeed, there had been the appearance of success: Decimus Brutus had overcome the Venetii, Sabinus the Unelli, Publius Crassus the Aquitanians. But all this was the work of subordinates—almost of servants. What had he done?

And what had he accomplished in the fourth year? He had made an expedition to Britannia, which had been unsuccess-

ful; he had made an inroad into Germania, which was merely a lunge into vacancy. Like a boy who brandishes his wooden sword in the air, dreaming of deeds which he had not the strength to accomplish.

Suddenly a terrible fear overcame him. He felt that time was slipping away beneath him, like a ribbon that ran from darkness into darkness. The irrevocability of every second was suddenly made palpable; and the vain pursuit of the present, to which only deeds could give substance.

Deeds! But to what end? Suddenly he knew that this question had long been latent in him; during the whole of these two last years, so poor in accomplishment. Like time itself, his goal had been slipping away from him, into the unknown, the unknown which filled him with dread.

How had it come to pass? Where was he to look for the beginning of this aimlessness? When had he lost his way? He groped along the Ariadne-thread of memory, out of the labyrinth into which he had strayed. The day of his parley with the German prince rose before him; at that time all had been clear and irrevocable; it was then that he had first fallen back, resolved, against his better knowledge and his conscience, to strike a death-blow at his unsuspicious adversary, who was prepared for reconciliation and friendship; it was then that a new feeling had come over him, the germ of what he was feeling now.

It had driven him on like a leaf swept away by the storm. Even the campaign against the Nervii was no more than the last turning of a flywheel whose motive power had suddenly failed. And then all was silent within him . . . dead . . . Others had to act for him; he sat still and did nothing . . . then he grew active again, indeed, but he acted without seriousness, almost as though he were playing a game, only in order to persuade himself that he was doing something . . . Britannia—Germania—and Britannia again . . . far on into uncharted vacancy . . .

In despair he tossed upon his bed. Had not the Spirit of the Universe itself appointed him to be a pile of the great

bridge, the divine bridge that led to perfection? Why did it desert him now in his need, why did it not speak to him? A sign! Only the least sign!

Without, the silence of the night lay over the camp. Now and again the chink of a spear struck upon the ground, or far away the steps of a patrol, of an officer making his rounds. So still was it that he could hear the breathing of the two sentries posted before his tent; the slow, deep breathing of the one and the quick, rather hurried, nasal breathing of the other. Involuntarily he tried to detach one from the other, and to count the breaths separately, but in vain; after three or four breaths the men were both breathing in unison, and he had to begin counting over again.

The nasal breather stopped, puffing, cautiously cleared his throat, and said, under his voice:

"Tiresome job this."

"'M!" grunted the other.

A pause. Then the first began again:

"One gets quite out of the way of a quiet life."

A fresh grunt in answer.

Silence again; but the first speaker would not give up; a third time he began:

"So we're off to Britannia again."

At last the other took the bait:

"Yes, as soon as the wind is favorable."

"Strange to think there is anything stronger than *he!*" observed the first. The listener in the tent smiled involuntarily.

"Don't be blasphemous!" the other corrected him.

"No intention of being blasphemous," said the man thus reproved. "Only just think what we've all done in the four years in Gaul: the campaigns against the Helvetii, against Ariovist, against the Belgi, on the west coast, in Germania, in Britannia—"

"But they say the war in Britannia last year didn't turn out very well," interrupted the other; but he added, quickly: "I wasn't there; last June, right at the beginning of the fight-

ing with the Germani, I got a thrust in the belly which gave me enough to think of until the autumn!"

"Didn't turn out very well!" cried the other eagerly. "You sheep's-head! Wherever we went the rascals got a good beating!"

"Quietly!" admonished the other. "You'll wake him up!—All the same, you had to come back," he continued.

"Of course we had to come back; we couldn't stay in Britannia for ever! He was only making a reconnaissance! Otherwise he wouldn't have taken only us and the Tenth with him."

"Yes," said the other, turning the conversation. "We of the Seventh have gone everywhere with him. Were you with him in Germania too?"

"I believe you! I helped with the bridge-building."

"That was when I was wounded."

"I tell you it all went on wheels! We wanted to follow the Germani over the Rhine, and the Ubii offered us a whole heap of rafts and canvas. But He said: 'No; why am I the supreme bridge-builder, the Pontifex? I will build a bridge!' And in two days the timber was cut and hewn; then we rammed pile after pile into the river-bed, laid balks of timber over them, with battens across, and covered the whole with hurdles—and within a week there was as good a bridge made as you could wish to see in Rome. The barbarians just had a look at it, and then they made off so fast we were never able to catch them. Since then they know enough to respect us."

A pause. Then the second man, apparently searching his memory for technical feats in which he too had had a share:

"Do you remember how we built the fleet on the Liger two years ago?"

"That was nothing compared with the bridge," replied the other jealously. "Building a fleet is only laying keels and stepping masts and sawing and nailing planks. The professionals have done all the difficult work."

"All the same, I like to think of the expedition to the coast."

"I don't. I only came in for the hard work. We took no end of trouble getting ready to storm one town after another, on their scurvy little islands, and when at last we got in the fellows had nipped into their boats and away, and the whole thing began all over again at the next island."

"But when we came with the fleet," said the second, "they soon whistled another tune. They thought they could soon settle with us on the water, but they were out in their reckoning; as soon as we had cut their halyards they were done. And there was loot to be had—plenty of loot!"

"Yes," growled the first, "and we came too late for all that. Just in time to have the pleasure of marching into the marshes with you."

"Quiet!" interrupted his comrade. "I think I can hear the patrol." Both listened awhile in silence. Then the second resumed:

"So we've finished with Gaul."

"Yes," replied the first. "That's why we are off to Britannia."

"I should like to know how long we shall need."

"Not long, you'll see; by autumn Britannia will be Roman."

"And then?"

"How do you mean, then?"

"What will He do then?"

The listener in the tent held his breath.

"How do I know? Now he's begun conquering he won't leave off. Perhaps we shall go from Britannia to Thule, and from Thule—"

"You can't go anywhere from Thule," interrupted the second man. "In Thule the world ends, or so a Greek once told me. The skies are burning with undying fire there, boiling springs gush out of the earth—"

"That won't matter to him," rejoined the first man. "He'll fight his way through anywhere. What can stand against him if he wanted to go forward?"

The man in the tent had a horrible choking sensation in his throat.

"Yes," he heard the second man say, "*but what does he really want?*"

The sign! The sign! said the hammering heart of the listener. The question which he had so often asked himself! Now he was to hear the answer—from the lips of simplicity, which utters the profoundest truths. A wave of emotion swept over him, robbing him for the moment of breath and almost of consciousness. He raised himself on his elbow, listening with outstretched head to the next words.

And then:

"Are you crazy, shouting like that?" interposed a harsh but muffled voice. "You'll wake the Imperator! You call that standing guard? I've a good mind to give you a talking to!" Silence. Then the harsh voice spoke again, this time with military brevity:

"Anything to report?"

"Nothing to report, centurion," replied the first man.

"Well, keep a good look-out, and don't let me catch you chattering on guard a second time, or something will happen." Slow, cautious footsteps gradually moved away.

"That's the new one," whispered the first man. "Cursedly sharp he is."

"Because you always shout so," replied the second, reproachfully. Then both were silent. Presently one could hear their breathing again; the slow deep breathing of the one, and the quick, rather hurried nasal breathing of the other.

And then at last came sleep, the leaden sleep of exhaustion . . .

THE LAST FREE MAN

CAESAR was courteous and amiable as ever to Divitiacus, but the two red patches on his cheek-bones and the carefully suppressed impatience of his voice betrayed the fact that he was near the end of his self-control.

"No, Divitiacus," he replied to the urgent pleading of the

Aeduic duke: "I cannot let that continue. You yourself must see that." He was speaking without an interpreter: the four years in Gaul had taught him enough of the language of the country.

"Great Caesar," Divitiacus began again, imploringly. Wishing to flatter the Roman, he took the trouble to speak Latin, and this exchange of languages had a singular effect. "You have shown me so much kindness and friendship—"

"You know what I think of you, Divitiacus. For your sake I have hitherto overlooked all that your brother has done to oppose me; I have never spoken of it, because I did not wish to pain you; I countered his moves in silence; but you must understand that I cannot overlook his open refusal to obey me."

"Great Caesar," began Divitiacus again, "I am not trying to defend my brother—"

"And I am not accusing him," interrupted Caesar. "All I desire is that you should understand the necessity of my action. Am I to allow him to profit by the confusion of embarkation to disappear, without my leave—indeed, against my orders—with your whole tribal contingent, and proceed to march home with them?"

"I am of course, not presuming to criticise your arrangements," said Divitiacus, quietly and diffidently, "but was it really impossible to allow Dumnorix to return—was it necessary to interrupt the whole embarkation on account of this unfortunate incident?"

"Yes," Caesar affirmed. "It was necessary: if only to make my will respected as it must be. Otherwise, at the next opportunity, some other Gallic leader might see fit to take his departure, and the end would be that I should be left alone. To prevent such incidents occurring in future I am compelled in this case to make an example." He noted the sudden pallor on Divitiacus' cheeks, and continued compassionately: "You need not be afraid, Divitiacus; if Dumnorix returns with the detachment which I have sent after him it will not

cost him his head—nor even his liberty; but he must at last learn to submit himself—absolutely and unconditionally."

The Gallic duke heard only that his brother was pardoned. Before Caesar could prevent him, Divitiacus threw himself down at his feet, and tried to seize his hands in order to kiss them.

"You will not kill him?" he cried, with tears in his eyes. "You will pardon him? For that I shall be eternally grateful!—But," he added, as a sudden doubt flashed into his mind, "I heard that you ordered your cavalry to bring him back alive or dead!"

Caesar lifted him from the ground.

"Now do understand me," he said, consolingly: "Dumnorix had to realize that I am in earnest, in deadly earnest. He will not make it necessary to take extreme measures."

The centurion stood at attention as the door of the tent was lifted. The commander of the guard entered and saluted. "What is it?" asked Caesar.

"The cavalry detachment has returned," announced the centurion, "and their leader is here to report."

"Let him come in," said Caesar. And as the centurion withdrew, he turned to Divitiacus: "Now we shall learn the whole story at once."

The cavalry leader entered: a thickset figure, somewhat bow-legged, with a hard, angular, impersonal face.

"Order carried out," he said curtly.

"Have you brought Dumnorix back with you?" asked Caesar quickly. Above all, he wished to reassure Divitiacus.

"Yes."

"Where is he?"

"Lying outside there."

An exclamation of dismay from the man at Caesar's side; faint and distressful.

"Lying?" A painful silence. "Your report," said the Imperator, in a dull, yet ringing voice.

The leader, himself a Gaul, glanced quickly and furtively at the two men before him. Caesar's expression was composed

and impenetrable; Divitiacus' features were distorted into a mask of agony. It hurt the centurion to see him: he resolved to make his report as short as possible, and to consider every word.

"In pursuance of orders we rode after Dumnorix and overtook him twelve miles from here. At first he thought we wanted to join him. His men halted and waved their lances and called out to us." He hesitated, seeking for words.

"Go on!" Caesar insisted.

"I gave him your order to turn round and come back with us. And I advised him that you were determined to proceed to extreme measures. Then Dumnorix said that you had no right to give orders in Gaul, and that we ought to be ashamed to take orders from you. And he tried to ride on."

"And you?"

"I trotted up to him and seized his bridle. Then he drew, and cut at me, so that I had hardly time to parry, and he called on the others to help him, and shouted that he was a free man and a citizen of a free State. And then the others got restless, and began to press the detachment, and some shouted that it was a shame, and that they would not obey you any longer." Once more he paused, and drew a deep breath: for now he was coming to the worst.

"Then there was nothing else for it—and I got him with my sword between the ribs," he concluded, half under his breath. "He died at once." Anxiously he looked into Caesar's impassive countenance.

"And the rest?" asked the expressionless voice.

"The rest—when they saw Dumnorix lying there they ceased to resist us and rode back with us. All of them have returned."

"Losses on our side?"

"None."

Again the heavy, oppressive silence. Then Caesar's voice, no longer expressionless but clear and urgent:

"You have done well and I am pleased with you. Go." A gesture of dismissal; the Gaul disappeared with a sigh of relief.

The harshness thawed out of Caesar's features; the grey eyes were full of compassion as they gazed on Divitiacus, whose face was wet with tears.

"Divitiacus," he said gently, "it distresses me that such a thing had to happen. Dumnorix, of course, will be buried with all due honor." He held out his hand to grip that of the duke.

But Divitiacus drew back. He bowed deeply, and on his pale, lifeless cheeks the fresh tears glittered like diamonds. "Caesar is too kind," he said, in a dull, lifeless tone. "With all honor—that is more than I had the right to expect. I feel sure that you are prepared to bury us all with due honor." He bowed still deeper, and left the tent, walking backwards and avoiding Caesar's gaze.

"Divitiacus!" There was amazement in Caesar's voice.

But there was no reply.

THE ENVY OF THE GODS

And so, for the second time, to Britannia.

But the narrow channel, which he could have crossed in a few hours with a favoring wind, was—and remained—a more difficult obstacle than he had supposed. It almost seemed as though in the Gallic coast the gods had set bounds to his ambition. Even now, indeed, he was successful; even now the natives, desperately defending barrier after barrier, were powerless to withstand the assault of his legions, but he no longer possessed the terrific driving-force which had carried him, almost without a halt, from the Alps to the northern ocean. He advanced only step by step, and had no fast hold of the conquered areas; they were like the sands of the British shores, that trickled away between his fingers.

So—for the first time in all his years of warfare—he began, unconsciously, to wish that he could give up his fruitless conquest and withdraw. As yet he did not dare to confess as much to himself, he tried to persuade himself that it was essential to reach the goal which was now so close at hand; but

he was powerless to banish the daily increasing unrest and uncertainty in his own heart.

It was one of many misty mornings, the sure guarantee of a scorching day, whose sultry heat would be unmitigated by any breath of wind from the all too distant coast. Caesar, as so often during the last few months, had slept badly, and now, unrefreshed and dispirited, was dictating the orders of the day to Hirtius and Pollio: the relays to the coast must be safeguarded and multiplied, and the patrols must renew contact with the enemy. He asked repeatedly whether the courier had arrived yet (the post being due that day), and, on hearing that he had not, relapsed into a moody silence. He felt tired and relaxed; he longed to rest, to forget everything. It was the first time in his life that he had had such a strange feeling. Was he growing old?

He considered this distressing problem. It was not long since he had passed his forty-fifth birthday; at Portus Itius, while waiting for a favorable wind. He remembered the congratulations of his lieutenants, his troops, and the Gallic lords in his camp. The gloomy features of Dumnorix appeared before him, forcing themselves with difficulty into a conventional smile. At that time the Gaul was still alive. That was barely a month ago, and now the young man, for whom, in spite of all, he had felt a certain liking, lay beneath his burial mound with a wound three fingers broad between his ribs. A man was so quickly killed. Where would his, Caesar's, grave lie? Would he too be struck down by a well-aimed sword-thrust . . .

At last the courier. He heard the heavy tread of the horse, tired out as always, and the usual questions and answers. Everything was as usual—dull, colorless, monotonous. Hirtius, without waiting for orders, ran out and returned with the full letter-bag, shook its contents out on the table, and with Pollio's assistance began with nimble fingers to sort them. A few minutes later the whole post lay carefully arranged before Caesar: a report from the sea-captain Quintus Atrius, official despatches from Rome, and a private letter.

Caesar opened the letters in due order. Atrius announced that the ships damaged in the recent storm had been repaired. Forty, however, must be given up for lost. Bad, very bad. Caesar reflected a moment, adding and multiplying. It would still be possible to get all his troops on board at one time. They would be crowded, of course; packed tightly together. But better so than not at all . . . He passed the report to Pollio, told him briefly to work out the new distribution of the troops, and took up the despatches from Rome.

These again were hardly of a cheering nature. How different from last year, when under the Consulate of his friends everything seemed to run on wheels! Today his enemy Domitius was at the helm, secretly and openly supporting all hostile efforts. With knitted brows he read of the heated senatorial debates over his campaign against the Germans, and of Cato's crazy proposal for his extradition on the count of his alleged illegal invasions.

He bit his lips in sullen rage. That they should have allowed such a proposal to be made! A thought which he had hitherto put from him whenever it occurred to him now began to assume a more definite shape. He imagined himself no longer bound by commissions and orders, but his own master, a free man, ready, in case of need, to defend his liberty, sword in hand.

Inwardly braced and spurred by the senators' presumption, he picked up the letters of Crassus and Pompeius. Crassus was wholly engrossed in his Syrian adventure; he was planning a great campaign against the Parthians; he begged Caesar to send him young Publius, for he wished to take his son with him. Caesar read the letter with regret; this would deprive him for years of his most reliable friend in Rome, and—not excepting Labienus—his best lieutenant in the field. But he could hardly refuse; besides, the ageing father's desire to have his son beside him in Asia was only too comprehensible.

And Pompeius? Pompeius made the old, unsubstantial complaints, from which only one thing emerged; the fact that he did not understand how to use his power, how to keep the

unruly Roman mob within bounds. He complained bitterly of Clodius, who, grown insolent again, had to be brought up short by one Milo, a brave hired by the Senate; he enumerated the obstacles which were put in his way by all parties —and here he seemed to intend a covert allusion to Crassus— but he had not a single real success to report, not a single practical, profitable action.

With a grimace Caesar laid his letter aside, and was about to stand up. Then his glance fell on the last letter. He picked it up, examined the handwriting, which was strange to him, and finally opened it.

It was a letter from his cousin Cotta, and it told him, in so many words, that his mother was dead.

The sheet in his hand seemed to grow bigger and bigger, until it filled his whole field of view. The ground slipped away from beneath his feet; the hand which he flung out to support himself fell heavily on the table, clutching the letter from Atrius, crumbling and tearing it. It was fully half a minute before a word came from his choking throat:

"The troops—recall them.—We are going back."

* * * * *

All was over.

As a matter of fact, everything had fallen out better than could have been expected. The Britons, thankful to be rid of their too powerful enemy, concluded a peace which preserved the prestige of the Roman arms by a formal submission. The homeward march of the troops lay through the newly conquered territory of the empire. But it was none the less a retreat. For a year or two the memory of the battles which had just been fought would remain effective; then the natives would reconquer the liberty they had enjoyed until now.

To Caesar all this was indifferent. He could hardly take the trouble of carrying through the negotiations with the enemy. His adjutants had supervised the difficult business of embarking the troops, while he sat alone all day in his tent. They

had respectfully shown him to his quarters on the flagship, and had given the signal to set sail as soon as they had a favorable wind. He let them do as they wished; he sat in the bow of the ship that bore him homeward, where the moist, salt night wind cooled his hot, dry forehead, and stared, motionless, over the almost unruffled sea.

The passage was made in absolute silence. The troops had learned of the grief which had unexpectedly stricken their beloved leader, and respected it in their touchingly simple fashion, inasmuch as they hardly dared to whisper or to move; now and again they exchanged furtive signs, but otherwise they were as silent as Caesar himself.

They had set sail about midnight; now it was nearly morning. In the east, in the far distance, the horizon was lighter. Was it the approaching dawn or the coast of Gaul? It was impossible to be sure.

All night long Caesar had not moved. His eyes stared fixedly at the slightly roughened sea; the rise and fall of the waves kept time with the ebb and flow of his thoughts.

He waited for the pain which should have come and would not; remembering the suffocating pang which had pierced his heart like a sword when, as a young man, he had learned of the death of his father; he wondered why he did not feel it now. He was surprised, almost amazed by his lack of emotion; he felt ashamed—but it was no use; if he tried to feign he would be lying to himself. He was filled only with the disconsolate awareness of an infinite void; he felt like one who is all alone in a wide, endless desert, and knows that his voice will reach no human ear.

One of his earliest recollections presented itself to his consciousness; as a child of three he had run into the garden, and suddenly found himself alone in the midst of the strange, menacing world, full of a terror that grew from moment to moment, until it became overwhelming, and found relief in his despairing cry of "Mother! Mother!" It seemed to him that he could still hear the creaking of the gravel under her hurrying feet, and feel the tender arms which closed about

him and rescued him, and lifted him high above all harm; and the dear, soft, consoling voice still sounded in his ear: "My silly baby! My silly baby!"

In those days the little garden of his father's house had seemed immeasurably vast; later the whole world was too small for him. What had happened in between—what had given him the strength to push so high, and to crush with an iron fist all the enmity that surrounded him? It was the loving care of his mother; the knowledge that he was not alone; that kindly eyes were watching over him wherever he might be; that a warm heart was beating at home, in which he could always find refuge if his distress grew overwhelming.

Now the world had again grown terribly vast; as vast as the little garden had seemed to him then; but now his most despairing cry would never bring his mother to the rescue; now he was thrown back upon himself, and no saving hand would again lift him from the confusion of his life.

The dawn was at hand; now the stretch of coast before him was plainly visible. It must be nearly sunrise. Inland was the profile of a forest, whose jagged edge even now was rimmed with light. The day and his duty were calling him. Wearily he rose to his feet. "Good night, Mother," he whispered; it was only afterwards that he realized that he had been talking nonsense.

Now the wide haven was becoming visible. With full sails, urged onward by the breeze that rose with the dawn, the squadron steered for the sheltered roadstead.

At one end of the harbor, close by the beach, was an earthen rampart, and on it a wooden castle. Labienus, thought Caesar, has been working hard. A figure stirred on the platform, and the sound of a signal-horn was wafted over the water.

In the camp there was a sudden bustle of life. From all the lanes between the tents the soldiers poured on to the beach and gazed at the returning fleet. More and still more ap-

peared. Why were they not shouting? Had Labienus also received news from Rome?

Yes, there he stood, erect, in an attitude of conventional composure; and not far from him was a man in mourning garments. And at that moment the sun rose above the horizon.

Glittering from truck to water-line in the golden light, Caesar's vessel was the first to enter the harbor. A boat put out from the shore, rowed towards him, and laid itself alongside. He stepped into the heaving boat, and was rowed swiftly to the beach. The shingle grated harshly under the keel; he stepped ashore, and stood on Gallic soil.

Labienus came sedately forward, halted at the prescribed distance, and saluted. Caesar acknowledged the salute and awaited his report.

"All is in order," announced Labienus, with soldierly brevity. Caesar nodded, and with a weary gesture abolished the distance between commander and subordinate. Labienus approached, an expression of condolence on his handsome, arrogant face. "Caesar," he began, in a subdued tone, "I regret to say—"

Caesar waved his hand.

"No need," he said, lifelessly. "I know."

"You know?"

"Lucious Cotta wrote to me in Britannia."

Labienus' face betrayed something like real distress.

"Caesar," he murmured, hesitatingly, "You do not know all." He felt the tired eyes fixed on his own, rigid as the eyes of a man in torment. Hastily he continued: "Your daughter Julia—quite unexpectedly—"

A quivering veil fell over the staring eyes.

"My mother—" he said, in a dull, tremulous voice, as though anxiously correcting his lieutenant.

"And your daughter," added Labienus quietly.

The slender figure before him drew itself up convulsively as Labienus had seen men draw themselves up when pierced to the heart by arrow or javelin. Then the tension suddenly

relaxed. Covering his painfully drawn face with his left hand, Caesar, with stiff, lifeless strides, passed Labienus and the rest and went to his tent, which had been pitched, large and splendid, in the middle of the camp—and disappeared behind its curtain.

THE BLOW OUT OF THE DARK

The late autumn day was nearing its end. The streets were empty of people; only here and there a belated pedestrian, keeping close to the walls, passed through the military city on his homeward way: the inhabitants of Samarobriva were forbidden to pass the bounds of their own wards after twilight, and it was not safe to take liberties with the Roman garrison, since the latter was under the command of the army commander. Consequently the only sounds to be heard were the slow tramp of the sentries and the marching step of the military patrols, whose watchful eyes swept every corner of the deserted streets. Here and there, in the houses, the flickering light of the oil lamp, a Roman innovation, was already visible.

Caesar looked down from the window of his room on the two sentries posted before the gate. Indifferent and immoveable, the two men stared into vacancy waiting to be relieved. Now and again, when a dog barked somewhere in the town, and its remoter comrades responded, one or the other would wearily turn his head, and as wearily turn it back again. Someone in the guard-room was singing a sentimental soldiers' song. The peace of twilight was settling down upon the town.

Caesar's glance travelled farther, across the street, to the buildings on the other side. One window was lit up; he could see right into the room. His two adjutants were there, apparently waiting for their dinner. Pollio was stretched lazily on the couch, his hands clasped behind his head; Hirtius was sprawling in an arm-chair. They were talking, evidently in high spirits, for now and again they broke into hearty laughter.

Caesar moved away from the window, and ordered the slave who was waiting at the door to prepare his evening bath, and summon the barber. In the hands of the barber in question, a Greek from Asia Minor, the not always pleasant operation of shaving was perfectly delightful, and Caesar was thankful to have discovered the man. In the meanwhile he went back to the window, in order to enjoy the peace and silence of the evening.

Within him too were peace and silence. After the first fierce paroxysm of grief—a grief renewed and intensified by the news of Julia's death—he had quickly regained his usual composure. Curiously enough, his sorrow had roused him out of the paralysis which had come upon him in Britain and had restored his wonted energy. He had not, indeed, set himself any lofty goal, had not considered any ambitious plans: but he had realized that a man's everyday task demands its full measure of energy, and had flung himself with renewed zeal into his work. The failure of the harvest had made it necessary to distribute the winter quarters of his troops over a wider area, so that the country should be less sensible of the burden imposed upon it; and he himself worked out all the details of their distribution, saw the men march off to their new billets, and did not allow himself to rest until reports came in from all sides stating that the detachments were settled in their winter quarters, and until he knew that all the garrisons of the wide curving line from the Esuvii on the west coast to the Eburones on the lower Rhine were in safety. But in the course of this work peace again returned to his soul; calm and deliberate, as though his emotions were hibernating, he went forward from day to day.

A patrol was crossing the market-place. At first he barely noticed it; then it suddenly attracted his attention. There were four men, and in their midst a Gaul, tattered and torn, and apparently in the last stage of exhaustion. Yet he seemed to be accompanying the soldiers willingly enough. One of the legionaries was helping himself along with a long spear, which had probably been taken from the man they were escorting.

They halted between headquarters and the house in which the adjutants were lodged. The patrol-leader growled a few words to the others, and entered the house. The Gaul, with a gasp of relief, leaned against a wall, and in a moment was asleep upon his feet. He must have come from a great distance. Whence had he come?

The patrol-leader emerged from the house with the officer of the guard, who when he appeared was still adjusting the strap of his helmet. The sleeping Gaul was shaken until he waked, and all disappeared into the adjutants' office. What was afoot? Caesar turned once more to the window of the officers' room.

Hirtius and Pollio had begun their dinner, and were enjoying their roast goose in peace and comfort. They were still in the best of spirits; they stopped laughing only to eat.

The door opened; the officer of the guard entered. The two adjutants looked up in surprise, and stared at the man with the reluctant gaze of men disturbed while thoroughly enjoying themselves.

A short, breathless announcement—and the adjutants' faces were suddenly grave. A curt order was given; the officer of the guard left the room, and returned with the Gaul, who stood blinking confusedly in the lamplight. He answered a question from Hirtius with some hesitation; then he broke into a fluent narrative. With every word his listeners grew paler and paler; at last they looked at one another with startled eyes. One or two brief questions were put, and then Hirtius, springing to his feet, snatched up the leathern jerkin from the chair on which it lay, drew it over his head, laced it with trembling fingers, caught up his sword-belt, and ran out, dragging the Gaul with him. *What was amiss?*

The door of Caesar's room swung open. But it was only Caesar's barber, who saluted him obsequiously, and began to lay out his tackle. With a hasty gesture Caesar bade him wait.

Once more the door opened: it was Hirtius. He rushed into the room, barely taking time to salute, and panted:

"A message from Quintus Cicero!"

"Yes?" Caesar looked at him with tense anticipation.

"The Eburones are in revolt," reported Hirtius, speaking so quickly that one word seemed to trip over another. "Near Aduatuca there has been heavy fighting. Cicero's camp is surrounded."

"Where is the report?"

"The courier has it. He would not give it to me: it is addressed to you personally."

"Bring him in."

Hirtius hurried out, returning at once with the Gaul, whose wide mouth was fixed in an embarrassed grin.

"You come from Cicero?"

"Yes—Cicero," said the Gaul, nodding.

"What is it? What have you brought?"

The Gaul opened his eyes as wide as possible and blew out his cheeks.

"Great misfortune!" he stammered, speaking in broken Latin, but with a fluency that proved that he had just been telling his tale to the best of his ability. "Lots of Gauls—do so—so"—he made a hewing gesture with both arms alternately—"Eburones all run away. Lots of Gauls," he repeated. "Do to soldiers like this!" He drew the edge of his hand across his throat. "Lots of soldiers!"

"When is this supposed to have been?" asked Caesar, with wrinkled brows. "According to the latest report all was quiet among the Eburones." The last words were spoken to Hirtius, who quickly nodded.

The Gaul roared with laughter, as though Caesar had made the best of jokes.

"Oh, all quiet now!" he cried, as well as he could for laughing. "All quiet now—all dead!" He rolled his eyes, and continued, amidst a shocked silence: "Eburones go. Aduatuci, Nervii, with the Eburones, Ambiorix duke. Then Ceutrones, Grudii, Levaci, Pleumoxii, Geidumni. All together. Lots of Gauls!" He seemed to be fond of the expression. "All to Cicero. Cicero here—Gauls there." With his right fore-

finger he tapped the centre of the palm of his left hand, and then described a circle round the spot. "Gauls say to Cicero: You surrender. Cicero say: No. Gauls say: Good, we wait till you hungry, very hungry, till you so hungry you die. Cicero call Iduorix, give him letter for Caesar. Gauls catch Iduorix and do *so*."—Again the characteristic gesture with the edge of the hand. "Cicero send Alvinus. Gauls catch Alvinus, make dead. Cicero ask, who brave man, who go Caesar. I say: I brave man, I go. Cicero say: You were free man, you be free man again if you take letter to Caesar; you get land and oxen and sheep and horses and goats and everything; but you take letter to Caesar. I take letter, tie on spear, put hand over. Stupid Gauls not see nothing, let me through. I run till I meet Roman soldiers. I ask: where Caesar? Soldiers show me: there. I run more, still more. I ask, I run, I ask, till I come here. Here I am with letter from Cicero."

"Where is the letter?"

"You Caesar?"

"Yes, I Caesar," said Caesar in impatient mimicry. "Give me the letter! Where is it?"

"Letter here." The Gaul fumbled under his rags and brought forth an unspeakably filthy, tightly-crumpled note, which he handed to Caesar. The latter took the sheet, unfolded it, smoothed it out, and took in the contents at a single glance. He turned pale as death.

"My poor boy!"

Then the color rushed back into his face. He flushed crimson, and the veins on his temples dilated. His blazing eyes swept across the room.

"Hirtius!"

"Caesar?"

"Couriers. Two—no, three. Have the horses saddled. Quick!" Hirtius was already out of the room. Caesar took two strides to the door. "Officer of the guard!"

"Imperator?" The man was already there.

"Alarm the garrison! Go!" The centurion rushed off.

Caesar turned back into the room, and his gaze fell on the barber: "Hipparchus!"

"Lord?" The slave crept forward, the razor still in his hand.

"Tablets and stylus!" Hipparchus ran to the table, opened several of the folded tablets, and laid the stylus beside them. Caesar sat down and began hastily writing. Outside the alarm was pealing across the market-place.

A few seconds later the door flew open, and a young officer entered.

"Courier present!"

Caesar handed him one of the tablets.

"To Marcus Crassus. At the gallop. Get all you can out of your horse. Go!"

"Present!" reported the second courier—and even as he spoke the second tablet was in his hand.

"To Labienus. The same. Dismiss."

"Present!" (This was the third courier.)

"To Fabius. Quick, quick, quick!" Now he was alone. Only the Gaul and the barber were cowering abashed in a corner. Once more Caesar read the note which he held crumpled in his left hand; and suddenly the tears rose to his eyes.

"The dogs!" he cried. "My poor boy! My poor, poor boy!" He went to the window, and pressing his forehead against the wooden frame, stared into the darkness of the autumn night.

Hirtius re-entered the room. Caesar turned round, and looked past him at the two slaves, the Greek and the Gaul, who still stood in their corner, hardly daring to breathe.

"Why are you still here?" he asked irritably.

"Lord—I was to shave you," stammered the Greek.

"Shave me?" shouted Caesar. "This is no time for shaving! When the Gallic dogs have paid me for my poor boy you can come again!" Never had anyone seen him so violent. He saw the startled faces around him, and continued, forcing himself with an effort to speak more calmly: "Go, Hipparchus;

make them give the Gaul something to eat, and show him a corner where he can have his sleep out. Go!"

Hipparchus signed to the Gaul, and crept to the door, followed by his companion. Caesar, as he watched them, seemed of a sudden to remember something.

"Gaul!" he cried.

The Gaul turned, and stood irresolute.

"Come here!" commanded Caesar; and then more sharply, as the Gaul still hesitated: "Closer!"

The Gaul approached him. Caesar patted his head, as though he had been a faithful dog who had just carried out an order correctly.

"You have done Caesar a great service, and you shall see that Caesar knows how to reward service. From this moment you are a free man, and can ask me for what you will." The Gaul grinned, and tried to imitate the military salute of the Romans. "Do not be too modest when I ask you what you would like." The grin grew broader, as much as to say that Caesar need have no fear as to his modesty. "For the present you will stay here, near me. Report to me tomorrow: you shall have a horse." The grin assumed alarming proportions. "You will have to lead us to Cicero. Now go and sleep." The Gaul disappeared, making guttural sounds of delight. Caesar turned to Hirtius. Despite his grief and anger and impatience he noted, with objective satisfaction, that his adjutant was already in marching kit.

"Aulus," he said, "you know what has happened. It is the greatest blow that has ever fallen on me. Now we must save what still remains to be saved, and before all else we must go to Cicero's assistance before he and his legion are crushed or starved out. My plan is as follows: since I cannot leave Samarobriva with its treasuries and magazines—and above all, with all the Gallic hostages—without a garrison, I have sent for Marcus Crassus. He ought to do his twenty-five miles' march during the course of the night. The moment we are relieved we shall march. On the way Fabius and Labienus will join us with their detachments. In four days at latest we must

reach Cicero; make all preparations for the march. The heavy baggage remains here. Go!"

Hirtius, having listened attentively, saluted and left the room. Caesar returned to the window and stared out into the night.

* * * * *

It was nearly morning.

No one had closed an eye all night. The troops were waiting in their quarters, ready to march; in headquarters and the adjutants' office the order of march was worked out with feverish haste. Hirtius stood in the entry, gazing impatiently down the street.

At last a sound of clattering hooves. A rider on a foundering horse appeared out of the darkness, halted before headquarters, and dismounted hastily but stiffly from his trembling, sweating mount. He was the courier who had been sent to Crassus.

Hirtius went to meet him.

"Is he coming at last? Caesar has asked after you ten times at least."

The courier was about to answer when Caesar himself appeared on the threshold. At the sight of him the rider's eyes, drunken with sleep, suddenly opened wide.

"Imperator," the young man mumbled, with a heavy, swollen tongue, "Crassus is following on foot; he cannot be more than eight miles distant."

Caesar nodded briefly, and turned to Hirtius:

"We march!"

GLABRIO THE LEGIONARY

The legions did more than merely hurry; they seemed to fly! Through endless forests, over rushing rivers, between marsh and moorland they made their way in frantic haste, their eyes gazing ahead, and their hearts far in advance of the hurrying column.

Only two of the eight legions were there: Labienus was far away, showing his iron teeth, like a watch-dog on the

chain, at the Treverian wolves who furtively encircled his camp, lusting for his blood; and the five other legions were too far away to be brought up in time.

Only two of the eight—but they had courage and pugnacity enough for all. The crooked Gallic roads slipped quickly away beneath them; the hard, equable tramp of their feet thundered far over the countryside. Pillars of dust by day and pillars of fire by night proclaimed far and wide that Rome was coming, to punish and take vengeance!

The Gallic messenger who had brought Cicero's call for help was riding ahead on Caesar's best horse. Once more he carried his spear; once more a written message was wrapped about the haft. It was written in Greek, so that the enemy, should it fall into his hands, would be no wiser; but the content was Roman, Caesarian: "Hold out! I am coming!"

The little army—seven thousand men and four hundred riders—had covered half the distance in two days. Although their trembling legs almost refused to carry them, the soldiers grumbled when their officers halted them for the night; if they could have had their way they would have marched all night, and all the next day, and again all the following night, if only they could reach their comrades and at last take their revenge.

On the evening of the second day the camp was established on a hill in the midst of the forest. Strong detachments went out in all directions to gather fire-wood, for the autumn nights were cold in Gaul. There was only one subject of conversation: When shall we get there?

Two or three of the men, having come to a dense undergrowth, exchanged a few words, and began to pick up the dry twigs lying on the ground. One of them thought he heard something rustling; he signed to the others to listen. Again there was a rustling.

"Anyone there?"

No answer, but out of the undergrowth a figure gradually appeared and stood upright, barely visible in the failing twilight.

"Halt! Hands up!"

A dull sound, that was at once like a dry sob and a hideous laugh. The figure did not move. The man who had called out sprang forward and recoiled with a shriek of horror, his hair bristling on his head; before him stood a legionary, without weapons, in a torn woollen shirt, and the man was holding out his arms to him: only his arms, for the hands were gone, and the stumps were wrapped in bloodstained rags. Now his face was plainly visible: a terribly rigid, lifeless face . . . in the place of eyes, two bloody crusts; and streaks of dried blood ran down the pale, sunken cheeks.

"Who are you?" gasped the man who had challenged him.

"Titus Vigilius Glabrio," answered the figure in a dull voice. "Fourteenth Legion, second cohort, third maniple, first century."

"How came you here, man?"

"From Aduatuca. All the rest are dead. I myself saw it—saw!" Whimpering, he pressed the stumps of his wrists against his empty eye-sockets.

The others looked at one another, horrorstruck. Then they went up to the mutilated man.

"Come with us," said the spokesman. "We are quite close. Caesar is advancing."

"At last!" murmured the legionary; and he collapsed like an empty sack, as though he had been clubbed on the head.

In Caesar's tent he recovered consciousness. Caesar, with the tears running down his cheeks, had with his own hands washed and dressed him, laid him on his own bed, and given him food and drink. Now Glabrio had so far recovered that he was able to speak.

He did not complain; he did not rave; he did not weep, or curse, or whimper. But more dreadful than any weeping or cursing or raving was the stony calm that lay upon his features, the stony calm of his voice. It was a very quiet voice, without resonance, but it filled the deathly silence of the tent. He answered all the questions put to him, and he related his experiences, in simple, uncouth words; yet to all those who

listened it seemed that they themselves were present, as though the bloody tragedy were enacted before their eyes.

* * * * *

Alarm! Alarm! The shriek of the tuba swept through the camp.

The men, about to cook their food, let fall their bundles of firewood, their cooking-pots, and bags of grain, and ran into the barracks.

A few moments later the first to reach them were already running out, their helmets jammed on to their heads, their jerkins hastily pulled on, their swords slung round their necks or in their teeth, their shields and spears in their hands; and so they raced for the parade-ground.

The centurions were there already, many of them still without their armor, with no weapons but the pilum or the naked sword. As the men came up, their officers sent them to the ramparts, where the under-officers waiting for them posted them along the works.

They were not a moment too soon. Before the ramparts were properly manned the first salvoes of stones and arrows and javelins whistled over the camp; aimed too high at first, and doing no serious damage.

The camp commandant Sabinus, standing on the parade-ground, flushed and excited, listened for the third time as the still breathless camp-follower repeated his fantastic tale: of a Gallic attack so sudden that of the men outside the camp at the time barely ten had returned. He would have been inclined to treat the excited narrative as the imaginings of a frightened man, had not the too-familiar dull roaring beyond the walls of the camp told him otherwise. He glanced helplessly at Cotta, who stood beside him struggling with a refractory buckle, listening with half an ear to the camp-follower's tale, shouting orders to centurions and men as they hurried past, and interspersing them with his choicest oaths.

Fresh salvoes, and the angry roaring that was now quite close at hand, told them that the attack was already fully

developed. The hurdles of the breastwork crackled under the raid of missiles; here and there splinters flew from the embrasures; the sharpshooters, in frantic haste, fitted arrow after arrow to their bowstrings; the slingers whirled their slings, loaded with lumps of lead; the legionaries, reserving their precious spears, gathered up the stones and javelins that fell around them and hurled them back at the assailants. Now and again a man threw up his arms and rolled backwards down the wall; a wounded man staggered from his post, trying with his hands to stop the flow of blood, and was instantly replaced by a comrade.

Cotta leapt on to the wall and crept crouching along the breastwork, peering at the enemy through the embrasures. All was well so far; provided the men did not lose their heads there was, for the present, no serious danger. As yet the Gauls had nowhere succeeded in reaching the walls, and the arrows of the sharpshooters were making terrible gaps in the ranks of the assailants; one by one they were breaking ranks and vainly seeking cover in the denuded area before the ramparts; already the first impetus of the assault seemed spent.

"Keep calm, men!" he repeated, again and again, hurrying along behind the now sweating defenders. "Keep your heads! We'll soon be rid of the cowardly pack!"

He leapt down from the wall and ran back to the parade-ground, where Sabinus was still standing, gazing excitedly about him and emitting a torrent of orders to which no one had time to listen.

"It is going well," said Cotta, as calmly as though he had just been inspecting manœuvres. "Our men are not going to lose their heads, and they are giving the vermin out there a nasty time."

"All to the embrasures!" shouted Sabinus, without listening to Cotta. "The last man to the wall!"

"But what's the matter with you? They are all there already without your telling them. There isn't anyone left to buckle your cuirass properly. Allow me!"—And he fastened Sabinus' shoulder-straps.

Cotta's composure seemed to have a soothing effect on the excited man.

"Thanks," he barked. And then, still with the look of helpless fury in his startled eyes: "What do you think of this bloody treachery?"

Cotta shrugged his shoulders.

"Did you ever expect anything else from the Gauls? But this is no time for mental and moral problems: the question of the moment is—what's to be done?"

"What's to be done?" repeated Sabinus, with a stare. "Beat off the Gauls: what else?"

Cotta clicked his tongue impatiently.

"Naturally: but as you know, there are two kinds of defence: defensive and offensive. And as I understand the Gauls, and the present situation, I think a heavy counter-attack wouldn't be at all out of place."

"You mean—we ought to send the legionaries—"

"The legionaries are doing very well where they are; but please to remember that we have a few squadrons of Hispanian cavalry."

Sabinus stared at Cotta, considering.

"That's given me a good idea," he said finally. "Order the Hispanian horsemen to break out of the main gate—"

"And fall right into the witches' cauldron," interrupted Cotta. "It is just there that the Gauls have their strongest position."

"Well, if you prefer, through the postern gate," said Sabinus irritably.

"Bad ground for cavalry."

"Then do what you like." Sabinus turned away angrily. Cotta nodded with satisfaction and hurried to the stables.

"That's given me a good idea!" he growled to himself. "Incapable blockhead! Too much for you, I suppose, to fall in with another man's ideas!"

Before the stables the commandant of the cavalry was standing with some of his officers.

"Decius," said Cotta, "get your men in the saddle at once

and ride at a walk out of the left-hand gate. Draw them up along the wall in the dead corner, then deploy, and charge down on the Gauls."

The commandant saluted and turned to the stables.

"Alarm!"

Cotta did not wait for the men to fall in; he hurried back to the wall and once more began his rounds.

The fight had developed as he had hoped; while the legionaries had suffered comparatively few casualties, there were many dead and wounded in the enemy ranks, and the offensive spirit of the Gauls seemed to have been largely quenched. It was true that they were still attacking at isolated points, but the great mass of them were keeping in the background, and confining themselves to slinging and hurling their missiles from a safer distance, and roaring hideously.

Cotta was standing by the left-hand gate when the cavalry detachment came up at a short trot.

"Open the gate!" he shouted. "At them, Decius!"

The tribunes and fascines and sandbags were flung aside. The horsemen filed out, formed up, and raced down the slope into the midst of the startled Gauls.

Cotta watched them. "That will do it," he told himself with satisfaction.

Half an hour later the cavalry returned at a walk. The surprise attack had scattered the Gauls in disorder. Roaring and howling, they fled into the dense forest that surrounded the clearing. The attack upon the camp had been beaten off.

The commandant reined in before Cotta and reported, proudly:

"Order executed. One man and two horses wounded."

Cotta nodded, smiling.

"Splendid, Decius. Your name will be in the report to Caesar. March in!" He turned to Sabinus: "We are rid of the fellows for this time; I am curious to know what trick they will play us next."

As in answer, a long-drawn howl resounded outside the camp. At the same time an orderly arrived with the an-

nouncement that two Gauls had appeared before the ramparts bearing green twigs as a sign that they wished to parley.

"Shoot them down," snarled Cotta.

"No!" interrupted Sabinus, quickly. "Don't be too hasty, Cotta! They may have something important to say! Bring them in!"

"Here in the camp?" cried Cotta. And after a short pause he said, resolutely: "I will speak with them myself." He followed the soldiers, who went to the postern gate.

It was a long while before he returned.

"As I thought," he told Sabinus. "Our energetic defence has made them respectful, and they want to negotiate. Ambiorix wants us to send someone to him; he has important communications to make."

"Ambiorix?" said Sabinus, in a surprised tone. "What is he doing with the Eburones? He is high in Caesar's favour."

"Like all the Eburones; and yet there is no denying the fact that they have today tried to storm our camp. In my opinion one should tell them to take themselves off before they make the acquaintance of a couple of well-aimed arrows."

"What are you thinking of?" said Sabinus, eagerly. "Ambiorix is a man of proved loyalty; we have often received the most important information from him. No, no, if he wants to tell us anything be sure it is something of the greatest value. I will send Junius to him; he has often been sent to him before." He looked round and beckoned to his nephew, who stood not far away, while a slave was wiping a stain off his leather jerkin. "And Arpineius can go with him. Perhaps the young man may have an opportunity of distinguishing himself."

"I don't see how," growled Cotta. "But you are the commandant; it is for you to give orders." He wrapped himself in his cloak, and listened, in silent disapproval, to the circumstantial instructions which Sabinus gave to the two envoys.

It was nearly night when the two young men returned. Arpineius went hastily up to his uncle, followed by Junius,

the interpreter. Both were excited, and obviously full of the important communications which had been made to them.

"At first," said Junius, "Ambiorix received us very coldly. But that was only a mask; for almost as soon as he was alone with us he became quite cordial and confidential. He reminded us of all the benefits he has received from Caesar, and assured us of his gratitude to the Imperator. He had taken part in the attack only under pressure from the great Gallic rebellion."

Sabinus gasped.

"Great Gallic rebellion!"

"Yes. The Gauls have today attacked all our winter camps, so that no legion can go to the help of the others. But he wished to give Caesar proof of his gratitude; he begs you most urgently that you will withdraw, with your troops, into safety before it is too late. In two days' time a huge army of Germani will be here; if you withdraw before it arrives he guarantees a free passage through his territory. He thinks you might try to reach Cicero, who is in cantonments about fifty miles from here; or to Labienus, who is not much farther."

Cotta laughed scornfully.

"He thinks!" he said, grimly.

"Do you think so badly of the proposal?" asked Sabinus. "If the general attack has really been made today—and I for my part am quite inclined to believe that it has—"

"Oh! Are you?"

"Certainly!" retorted Sabinus, rather sharply. "Otherwise would this miserable tribe have dared to attack a Roman detachment?" He gazed into Cotta's gloomy face, and continued. "Cotta," he said, in a conciliatory tone, "be reasonable. We aren't playing a military comedy; we have to discuss a proposal which is worth consideration."

"But what is there to discuss?" cried Cotta, passionately. "What? Caesar has sent us into winter quarters here, and here we have to stay. You surely will not allow yourself to be alarmed by the sinister hints of this Ambiorix! In the first

place, he is lying; in the second, as long as we are in this fortified camp we can deal with the supposed Germanic army until help comes from the nearest garrison, or from Caesar himself; and thirdly, I think it in any case shameful and scandalous to base our decisions, in a matter of such importance, on the advice of an enemy!"

During their dispute, which was becoming more and more audible, a number of listeners drew near, surrounding them in a close-packed circle: staff officers, centurions, and legionaries. Cotta's words were greeted with a general murmur of assent. This enraged Sabinus.

"Of course!" he cried. "And if we don't polish off the Germani in time? Or if things should go wrong in one of the nearer contonments? Then it will be too late to retreat! You can't look for help to Caesar; he has left for Italy. We have only ourselves to rely on. Gaul is in a blaze: and by themselves"—and here he repeated his former argument, whose effect upon Cotta he had not failed to note—"by themselves the Eburones would never have dared to attack; the Rhine is close at hand; the Germani are itching to avenge their defeat in the Rhine valley; I am thinking of the situation, not of the man who gives us the advice. My proposal is in any case the safer: if no unexpected disaster befalls us we shall reach the next legion in safety. But you, on the other hand—what would be the result of following your proposal?" He looked about him, singling out with his gaze those who had agreed with Cotta's remarks. "We should perhaps escape a momentary danger, but only to starve miserably here in camp."

There were cries of dissent. To the older, more experienced officers in particular the contradiction was obvious. Sabinus raised his voice until it could be heard by every soldier in the crowded parade-ground.

"Very well, have your way! I am the last to be influenced by the fear of death; but these men here ought to know"—and he pointed to the legionaries—"if a disaster occurs: let them hold you responsible! I would have led them, in two days' time, safely to the nearest legion, and together with

that legion we could have resumed the fight; they have only you to thank if they die here, of starvation or the sword, outcast and forsaken by all!"

Angrily Cotta bit his lips.

"One cannot deliberate like this," he said at last. "I beg you to convoke an officers' assembly!"

"But that is what I have been wanting the whole time!" cried Sabinus, as though with relief.

* * * * *

The meeting broke up at midnight. After endless unfruitful debates Cotta and his supporters had yielded to the entreaties of the rest, who implored them not to risk disaster by their obstinacy. The retreat was decided upon.

The rest of the night was devoted to packing. As in all protracted campaigns, every soldier had collected a great quantity of useless stuff, mere ballast, with which, however, he found it impossible to part. It was not easy to decide what should be taken and what left. At last, however, the whole legion was ready to march, and it was with relief that Sabinus gave the order to break camp.

The legions moved off in column formation, divided into cohorts. Behind the cohort of skirmishers rode Sabinus and Cotta with the rest of the staff; followed by the cohorts of the First Legion, with the eagle in their midst. Quintus Lucanius, their commandant, a grim old campaigner, was talking under his breath to his predecessor, Titus Balventius, who had remained with the troops as a veteran, enjoying the respect with which he was regarded, and watching over his friend's young son, who was serving in the Fourteenth Legion. The rest of the cohorts followed; first those of the legion, then the five independent formations. Last of all came the baggage-train, flanked and guarded by the cavalry.

It was a dull, misty morning. Rigid and menacing on either side of the track stood the lofty pines, interspersed with dense and luxuriant undergrowth. Not a sound was to be heard; not a living creature was visible. Sabinus, who had

passed a restless night, during which he vainly sought the answer to his own questions—whether Cotta's advice were not after all the sounder—plucked up heart, and began to praise Ambiorix for his integrity, and even to make excuses for him.

Cotta made no reply to the garrulous outpourings of his superior. Wrapped to the ears in his cloak, he sat erect in the saddle, with every sense alert, gazing indefatigably from side to side. This morning reminded him of the march through the enchanted country of the Nervii; there was the same deadly stillness, which then was suddenly broken by the war-cry bellowed from thousands of hostile throats. Only once he interrupted Sabinus' torrent of words:

"We ought to have sent out flank skirmishers as well."

"Flank skirmishers?" said Sabinus, in surprise. "What for? You see that Ambiorix is keeping his word."

Suddenly the track twisted downwards, rather steeply, into a narrow wooded valley. Cautiously the men descended in single file, heedless for the moment of their accustomed order. No sooner was the column reformed at the bottom of the slope than it resumed its march.

Suddenly the vanguard halted. Some of the men ran together in a cluster; they seemed bewildered and excited.

Cotta, stretching himself in the saddle, rode up to them; one of the legionaries, his face covered with blood, carried rather than led by two of his comrades, was being sent back to the baggage-train.

And at the same moment there came that which Cotta had been fearing and almost expecting: a hideous roar, as from innumerable wild beasts, that seemed to sound from all sides at once; a hail of arrows, javelins, and stones; and swarms of Gauls amidst the tree-trunks.

Densely packed as locusts and fierce as wolves they fell simultaneously on vanguard, flanks and baggage-train. Before the legionaries had recovered from their surprise many of them were already lying dead or wounded. The rest flocked together like sheep; from the very first all semblance of order

was lost, and a panic seized them to which even the bravest and coolest were not immune.

Sabinus had of course lost his head. His eyes stared terror-struck from his pallid face as he shouted a string of barely intelligible and often contradictory orders; and these, received and passed on by the officers around him—as far as they were still capable of listening and understanding—increased the confusion beyond measure. The air was filled with curses, shouts of rage, screams of agony and wails of despair. And into this chaotic mass of now hardly human creatures, who but a few minutes before had been a force formidable in its ordered energy, the hail of arrows and javelins smote incessantly, and heavy missiles of the slingers crashed, while the long Gallic swords cut their wide, bloody swathes.

Then Cotta took control of the situation. Leading the horse of the still desperately gesticulating Sabinus, he made his way to a clear spot on the floor of the valley. On the way thither he met the standard-bearer Petrosidius, who, like most old soldiers, had soon recovered his senses after the first surprise, and now, sword in hand, was waiting for an opportunity to join in the fray. Keeping Petrosidius beside him, he stood up in his stirrups, raising his free hand, and shouted, in a voice that for a moment rose above the roar of battle:

"Comrades! Form a square about me!"

A few veterans obeyed at once. The centurions drove their men toward the glittering eagle that rose at Cotta's side. Two trumpeters appeared from somewhere, and with bursting lungs blew and continued to blow the rally on their tubas. In the chaos order began to make its appearance.

But around the baggage-train things were going badly. The cavalry, who had been caught as they were climbing down the hillside with their horses, and were consequently quite defenceless, had been cut down to the last man. Many of the legionaries, however, were unwilling to lose their treasures, which were packed amidst the baggage, so that now and again

an individual legionary made an attempt to reach the baggage-train. All, of course, fell before they could do so.

Once more Cotta's voice roared above the din:

"Leave the baggage to look after itself! Who does not stand by me dies!"

That did a little good; but Cotta saw the brown, scarred faces about him turn pale; now the men understood that their position was desperate.

And the Gauls too knew it; with a howl of joy they flung themselves on the close-packed troops.

But these were no longer a flock of defenceless sheep; rather an iron porcupine, whose spikes pointed in all directions; Cotta was successfully repeating Caesar's manœuvre in the battle with the Nervii. What was more, the legions were making vigorous and formidable counter-attacks. Here and there a cohort rushed forward, cleared a dreadful, bloody circle, and returned in good order.

Long, unintelligible cries rang out along the Gallic ranks. The barbarians withdrew into the dense forest, disappearing as suddenly as they had come.

The soldiers profited by the breathing-space—they knew only too well that it was nothing more—to set things in order as well as they could. Men who had been driven from their units rejoined them; others only now took their helmets from their knapsacks. The slightly wounded bound up their cuts; the more severely wounded were brought into the centre of the square.

Sabinus, who had more or less recovered his senses, gazed with concern at Cotta's bloody, swollen mouth.

"You are wounded?" he asked.

Cotta pressed the back of his left hand against his lips; with the right, which held his sword, he made an impatient gesture.

"A stone hit me in the face," he replied, sibilantly, "and knocked out a few of my teeth. But there's no time to think of that: here come the brutes again."

He was right; once more the war-cry of the Gauls rose

into the air; once more the hail of missiles crashed into the square.

A few cohorts went forward to clear the surrounding woods. As soon as they approached the assailants the latter fled, so the cohorts turned about in order to regain the square; but in a moment the fugitives had returned; on either side the Gauls burst out of the woods and rushed on the isolated groups, who contrived to withdraw only with heavy losses. Two or three cohorts, who tried to stand their ground, were surrounded and cut down after furious hand-to-hand fighting.

And so it was always: if one of the iron limbs was thrust forward it met only vacancy, but as it withdrew it was surrounded by the murderous rabble, and disappeared as though devoured.

It was drawing on toward evening. The legions, who all day long had been fighting desperately without food or water, were still unshaken, but they had suffered terrible losses; the majority of the under-officers had fallen, and among them the two senior centurions; whole cohorts had been annihilated, and of those who survived hardly a man was wounded. Then Sabinus made one last, desperate attempt to save the day: he beckoned to his interpreter and whispered a few words in his ear. The man nodded, forced his way through the square, and ran with uplifted hands toward the Gauls. He was seen to exchange a few words with some of them; then the group disappeared into the undergrowth. Cotta, watching the incessant hail of missiles with staring, bloodshot eyes, cursing softly and sibilantly through his swollen lips, noticed nothing of this.

After a little while the interpreter reappeared. Bending low, he darted out of the wood, ran across the empty space back to the square, forced his way back through the close-packed ranks, and began eagerly to speak to Sabinus, whose despairing countenance gradually grew brighter. At the same time, quite suddenly, the rain of missiles ceased.

Cotta looked up in surprise, and turned toward Sabinus.

He saw the interpreter speaking with vivacious gestures; he saw Sabinus' eyes light up with a hope that to him was unintelligible, and he leant over in his saddle.

"What has happened?"

"Cotta," replied Sabinus, in a voice almost stifled with emotion, "we are saved."

"Saved?"

"I have sent to Ambiorix, and I hope through him to save the situation; he invites us to a parley. Will you come with us?"

Cotta was outraged. A cry of indignation rose to his lips; but he suppressed it, and said, coldly and harshly, in a tone that made further discussion impossible:

"I go to no enemy who has weapons in his hands."

Sabinus looked at him, startled, tried to find an answer, but was silent, and turned away shrugging his shoulders. Collecting such staff officers and centurions as were close at hand, he left the square in their company. They were received by a number of Gallic nobles who were waiting at the edge of the wood, and led off into the forest.

Then followed some minutes of dreadful suspense, which seemed to the Romans an eternity. The Gauls had once more disappeared into the forest, but it was obvious that they were waiting there, and that they had not laid down their weapons.

A rumour began to pass through the close-packed square. The legionaries nearest to Sabinus had overheard his words to Cotta. Now they were passed from mouth to mouth, modified and interpreted by reviving hope; and they did their sinister, paralyzing work. The serried ranks began to dissolve; groups began to form, and the possibility of salvation so unexpectedly offered to these doomed men was debated in tremulous excitement and timid hope. Already some of the legionaries declared that the enemy in the wood had made friendly signs to them; already they believed that they could see the commandant and his staff returning.

Then suddenly the air was once more rent by the shrieking of the Gauls; but this time the sound was fiercer and shriller

than before; a terrible scream of intoxicated triumph. At the same time they again rushed forward on every side, charging the square, which did not close its ranks in time, swinging their long swords—and above the swords, on the long spears of the Gauls, the bloody heads of Sabinus and his companions nodded to the doomed company.

All knew that this was the end. Cotta vaulted from his horse, forced his way into the foremost ranks, and flung himself into the thick of the assailants. Many followed him. They saw him laying about him like a madman, and saw how a whole pack of Gauls closed in on him; again, and yet again his arm flew up, and the dripping sword flashed red; and then the waves closed over him.

In the massacre that followed only the nucleus of the square, consisting of war-worn veterans grouped about and guarding the eagle, put up a desperate defence. While their comrades were cut down all round them rank by rank, they slowly and with difficulty fought their way back in the direction from which they had come. Every step cost blood, but they advanced. The deepening twilight came to their aid. Slowly they won back to the hillside path, climbed it step by step, striking out in all directions like wounded beasts of prey, and at last reached the highway, some two hundred strong.

But here their courage failed them. They ran and ran their dismal race with death, for the sake of a little longer life, until at last, exhausted, and with bursting lungs, they stood before the ramparts which they had left that morning, and which rose above them intact and sheltering and consoling.

Once more overtaken by the Gauls, they turned to fight their last battle. Wave upon wave of the enemy rolled upon them, but they stood with the good camp wall at their backs, and fought as bravely and magnificently as ever they had fought in any of the countless battles which they had fought for the honor and glory of Rome. The standard-bearer, bleeding from many wounds, and feeling that his strength was failing him, with a last mighty effort flung the sacred

eagle over the ramparts, and then, following the example of his commandant, swung up his sword and rushed at the enemy. Many of his comrades did the same. The rest fled into the camp through the gates, which they promptly barricaded.

The darkness prevented the Gauls from storming the camp immediately; so they contented themselves with encircling it, and hurling a number of stones and javelins into it at random. All night long they sat over their watch-fires and howled their songs of triumph.

Next morning their scouts cautiously approached the ramparts. Not a sound was to be heard, and no one opposed their advance. They came forward in greater strength; but still there was no sign of resistance. At last the boldest ventured to climb the wall. The rest followed. In the camp they found only dead men; each with his own sword in his breast.

* * * * *

Glabrio had ended his tale. Hirtius was sitting with his face hidden in his hands, his fingers buried in his hair; Pollio, pale as death, was leaning against the tent-pole, staring wide-eyed into vacancy; Fabius was pacing to and fro, and biting his lips until they bled. Caesar was sitting beside the mutilated soldier, steadily stroking his cheeks and forehead.

After a while Glabrio resumed:

"They caught me and a few of my comrades outside the camp; there were too many of them. All night we lay bound. Next morning when all was over—they slaughtered the others like cattle—when it came to my turn they stopped—and took counsel—and then . . ." He was silent; a dull, rattling groan found its way from his breast.

"Quiet, my son, quiet," said Caesar, in a voice as tender as a mother's. "From now on Caesar is your eye and your hand. —Be easy, my son." But he too suddenly groaned; yet the groan was like the spitting of a terrible and infuriated beast of prey. "They shall pay for what they have done to you," he shrieked, "they shall pay so dearly that you yourself would say 'Enough!' if you could see!"

The shrieking voice grew soft again, soft and tender: "Come, my son, drink, drink!" He stood up, and reached for the beaker full of wine that stood on the table. Then he stopped, drew a ring from his finger, held it over the beaker, and twisted the stone. A brownish powder fell into the wine, and was at once dissolved. The others watched, and held their breath, and understood. With his left hand Caesar raised the soldier's head; with his right he held the beaker to his lips. The mutilated man drank thirstily. Then he suddenly struggled to rise; his handless arms waved in the air; and he fell back, and his body relaxed and lay still.

"Sleep, my son!" said Caesar softly, and with a gesture of infinite tenderness he drew his cloak over the dead legionary.

POOR COUNTRY!

THE lieutenants were assembled in the Samarobriva headquarters, and were waiting for Caesar. It was the same room in which he had received the news of the catastrophe at Aduatuca, and something of those disastrous tidings seemed still to hover in the air. When they spoke they did not dare to raise their voices, and once and again they glanced nervously toward the door, as though any messenger who entered must once more bring grievous tidings.

They had all come thither, leaving their legions in strongly-fortified camps, under the command of the military tribunes, with express orders to undertake nothing without instructions. Not one of them would have dared to refuse to come; the orders which they had received were too momentous.

There stood Labienus, with his cold, beautiful face, still as well-groomed, despite his five years of active service, as though he had just been strolling down the Via Sacra; Fabius, with his degenerate, aristocratic tiger's mouth, stood beside him, and now and again whispered some scathing comment on one or another of the company; Roscius coquettishly threw out his chest, which was glittering with decorations awarded for personal valor (he was famed throughout the

army for his foolhardy courage); Quintus Cicero, whose once comfortable cheeks had lost their former fullness under the privations of the siege, was querulously asking for Marcus Crassus' sympathy (Publius was already with his father in Syria); Trebonius, with his wooden, conventional soldier's face, was silently stalking to and fro, his hands behind his back; Minucius Basilus, slender, graceful, and rather stupid, was strolling from group to group with the rolling gait of a cavalry officer; Plancus and Vocatius stood together in the background, exchanging reminiscences of their campaigns.

From a neighboring room could be heard snatches of a dictated despatch—or rather, of several despatches, for Caesar liked if possible to get all his despatches written simultaneously, so that the adjutants and scribes found it difficult to unravel the confusion to which he alone had the key: " . . . I ask you privately . . . whether it was right . . . to sacrifice Gabinius . . . who for so many years . . . has proved himself to be thoroughly useful and absolutely reliable . . ."

"That's to Pompeius," whispered Fabius to his neighbor. "They proceeded against Gabinius on a charge of irregularities in the provincial administration, and Pompeius has let him down."

"Caesar will be furious," whispered Labienus, with an equivocal smile.

" . . . in view of our friendly relations . . . to persuade your son . . . that he should give a little less rein . . . to his poetic caprices . . ."

"That is to old Catullus," whispered Fabius maliciously. "The son has written a poem on Caesar: absolutely corrosive. Listen:

> He squanders first his heritage,
> And then he sheds the soldiers' blood
> By Pontus' and by Tagus' shore.
> Oh ye Britons, Oh ye Kelts,
> Up and drive the rascal off,
> Land-Eater insatiable!"

He winked an eye. "Well?"

"I'm damned!" Labienus covered his mouth with his hand, to conceal a smile.

" . . . that this nonsense about the dictatorship . . . shall at last be disposed of for good and all . . . since I am not disposed . . ."

"To Marcus Antonius, the people's tribune," whispered Fabius.

"I know," Labienus nodded. "Pompeius has an eye on the dictatorship."

"Might there not be worse things?"

Labienus was about to answer, but he interrupted himself: "Hush, they are coming!"

The door of the adjacent room flew open, and Hirtius appeared.

"The Imperator!"

The officers drew themselves up. Caesar entered, in his cuirass; over it fell the black cloak which he had worn in the place of his former red mantle ever since the catastrophe in which Sabinus and Cotta had perished. His olive-brown face was framed in a thick, bristly full beard; the angry words which he had once, in this very room, hurled at the Greek barber had for him been an oath: his hair and beard should know neither scissors nor razor until the raid upon Aduatuca was avenged.

With a careless gesture he answered the salutes of his lieutenants and put them at their ease; then, going up to them, he began without prelude:

"I have summoned you hither because my hands are at last free, and I mean to call the Eburones to account. The delay which was unfortunately necessary, and the campaigns against the insurgents in the North seem to have given the Gauls the belief that I do not intend to punish the guilty. This belief of theirs I propose very thoroughly to undeceive." His blazing eyes rested on each man in turn. "Mark well the name of the Eburones: today it is the name of a tribe; in two months from now it must be the name of a tribe that was."

The pale cheeks and blazing eyes of the men confronting him told him that he was understood. He continued:

"The course of the campaign so far has made an end of the rebellion: it remains to make a clean sweep. Above all it is necessary to isolate the Eburones from their neighbors.—Fabius! Crassus!"

"Present!"

The two officers stepped forward.

"We shall march first of all against the Menapii; on a wide front, with three columns; the first I shall lead; the second you, Fabius; the third you, Crassus. We shall advance methodically, precisely abreast, and lay the country waste. Submission will be accepted on the condition that they neither help the Eburones nor give them shelter.—Labienus!"

"Present!"

"You will take over the territory of the Treveri, with three legions. I leave the details of your operation to you. The final result must be the same as in the case of the Menapii. Since after settling with them I too shall march into the country of the Treveri, you will then join forces with me.—Roscius!"

"Present!"

"You will march to the Rhine with one of the three recruit legions, and pick out a good place for throwing a bridge over the river. You are not to allow yourself to be involved in any sort of hostilities unless you are attacked. Instead of fighting, you will collect information regarding the Germani on the right bank of the Rhine.—Plancus!"

"Here!"

"You will remain in Samarobriva with the second legion of recruits. Your task will be to furnish relays to the individual detachments, and to see that reports of all kinds reach me as speedily as possible, and also to pass on my orders. At the same time you will take over the command of the garrison.—Cicero!"

"Present!"

"You will march with the convoy to the ill-fated camp of Aduatuca, and will wait there for further orders. Since the

camp walls are still standing you will easily put it into shape again. As escort to the convoy you will take with you the third recruit legion.—The rest of the officers present will join my staff."

"He is making preparations," whispered Fabius, who had made his way back to Labienus, "as though he were going to conquer the world."

Labienus made no reply; he licked his lips, which were parted in a cruel smile. All this meant war and bloodshed, and rejoiced his wolfish heart.

Once more Caesar looked about him. He bit his lower lip for a moment, and then continued:

"The execution of the plan which I have outlined should not present any difficulties; in a month's time all must be accomplished, and the army, with the exception of the two intermediate garrisons, assembled on the Rhine. There we shall divide ourselves into three groups: you, Labienus, with three legions, will move in a north-westerly direction, along the frontiers of the Menapii to the shores of the ocean; you, Trebonius, will march along the Rhine with two legions; the third column, between the other two, I myself shall lead. The same orders will hold good as for the first part of the campaign—only they will be carried out even more thoroughly: not a blade must be left in the fields, not a house in the towns and villages. All life will be destroyed; not a woman, not a child will be spared; not even the cattle in the pastures. Burn, ravage and slay to your heart's content! With fire and iron I mean to extirpate this blemish from the face of the earth!"

He spoke in a voice that shrieked and hissed. His lieutenants shuddered as they heard the terrible doom which their leader, at other times so clement and ready to pardon, had pronounced on the wretched tribe of the Eburones.

A third time he looked about him, a cruel smile upon his lips.

"For the rest, it may not be necessary to risk the lives of our soldiers.—Plancus! You will receive from Hirtius an appeal which you will scatter broadcast: it is an invitation to

the whole of Gaul to share in the loot and plunder. The Eburones have drunk enough Roman blood: if men's lives are to be lost in their forests, I had rather a thousand Gauls perished than a single legionary!"

NO PEACE!

THE campaign was ended.

Burned by the Gallic suns, but for the first time for a long while calm and almost cheerful, Caesar rode up to his headquarters. His plans had been more than successful: of the tribe of the Eburones only the name survived, and even this would endure only so long as Caesar chose: if it pleased him today to command that it should be erased, Gaul, which lay exhausted at his feet, would obey him.

All this had to be, though Caesar would fain have prevented it, but now he had done enough; now he must help the prostrate land to recover. Now that it had learned to know the sharpness of Caesar's sword it must learn to know the blessings of his good will, and become the youngest though not the least member of the body of Western civilization.

But all this must wait a little while; and the sheaf of despatches from Rome, which had accumulated on his table during his absence; these must wait, all affairs must wait: for Caesar had granted himself a one day's holiday, and this he meant to enjoy with all his will.

Before headquarters he dismounted, took his leave of Marcus Crassus and Trebonius, who had escorted him, and gave Hirtius and Pollio leave for the day. Full of delicious weariness, he went slowly upstairs, and entering his room dropped with a sigh of relief into an easy chair. To the slave he spoke one single word:

"Hipparchus!"

A few moments later the barber appeared with his obsequious smile, and began to strop his razor. The sound reminded Caesar of the whetting of sickles, and conjured up a peaceful landscape: endless cornfields, bright with the red

of poppies and the blue of cornflowers; a peaceful hedge in the background; and over all sunlight and the singing of skylarks. He was comfortably aware of hot water on his cheeks, of the faint scraping and scratching of the razor, working its way with some difficulty through nearly a year's growth of beard.

With satisfaction he regarded his smooth features in the circular frame of the metallic mirror, smiled at the pallor of lips and cheeks, which contrasted so strongly with the deep tan of the nose and forehead, and slowly rose to his feet in order to step into the bath which had been prepared for him.

His black mantle and tunic fell to the floor. With a tired, contented smile he looked down upon them, and then glanced at the bed, on which lay the snow-white tunic and the toga with the broad scarlet stripe. Now he could lay aside his mourning garments: the season of joy, of fruitful labors had come.

How cool and kind was the caress of the water that closed about his body, washing away not only the dust of the highway, but the dust that had gathered on his soul! For the moment, at all events, Caesar was perfectly happy. Drowsily his head fell forward, his eyes closed, his relaxed limbs lay side by side, quietly and gently as tired children.

Had someone knocked?

Caesar started, and felt his heart beat more strongly. He smiled at himself: had he grown so nervous?

But someone had really knocked; now he was knocking again, softly and cautiously, but insistently. Caesar turned his head toward the door.

"What is it? Who is there?"

"Hirtius," came the answer.

"What is it?" repeated Caesar.

"Marcus Crassus is here, and begs that he may speak to you."

"Now, at once?" The comfortable mood was destroyed; Caesar was conscious of a rising anger.

"If it is possible, Caesar," said the distressed voice of the

visitor behind the closed door, "I beg you to receive me at once."

There was something in the vibrating tones that startled Caesar. He stood up, threw a bath-sheet round his wet body, went to the door, and shot back the bolt. Hirtius and Marcus Crassus stood without, one with wide, excited eyes, and the other barely able to keep his feet.

"What is it?" asked Caesar for the third time.

"My father, Publius—" said Marcus, in a choking voice.

A sudden fear gripped at Caesar's heart.

"What has happened to them?"

Marcus raised two trembling hands to his temples. "They have both fallen!" he cried despairingly. "Massacred by the Parthians, with all their troops!"

"Impossible!" Bewildered for a moment, Caesar stared at his adjutant, who nodded in confirmation: "All the despatches from Rome are full of it."

Caesar stood rigid as a statue. Then he glanced at the deserted bath, and turned again to Marcus Crassus, who, at the end of his endurance, was leaning half unconscious against the doorpost. He laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Marcus—you know how deeply I sympathize with you. We will speak of this again. Now go." The young man nodded, as though Caesar's words had afforded him some consolation, and disappeared down the stairs. Caesar looked after him, and then, turning to Hirtius: "Take the despatches into my room and send me a slave," he said. "I will come at once."

The slave came promptly and dried Caesar, in obedience to a silent gesture, and zealously picked up the snow-white tunic.

"Leave that where it is," said Caesar quickly, and stooped to pick up the black tunic which he had carelessly cast aside.

* * * * *

Hirtius had spoken truly: all the despatches were full of the recent disaster that had befallen Rome; they told of the

successful commencement of operations in Syria, of the crossing of the Euphrates, and the ill-fated march through the desert; of the treachery of the Arab Emir Abgar, and the collision at Karrhae, where Publius Crassus lost his life, and the desperate retreat to Sinnaka, where catastrophe overtook the legions. Of the proud expeditionary force of forty thousand men barely one fourth had returned, and these thanks only to the foresight of Crassus' second in command, Caius Cassius, who saved what could be saved from the wreck and led it by perilous marches back to Syria. All else was lost.

But the despatches contained yet other bad news: in the Capitol, in Rome itself, absolute anarchy prevailed. Clodius and Milo, always given to encroaching on the rights of others, were causing trouble all round; their mounted supporters were fighting daily in the streets, and all those who could manage to profit by the general disorder were fishing in troubled waters. Pompeius was either unable to restore order, or he had no desire to do so: for once Crassus had left Rome, and was no longer able to use his interest in Caesar's interest, the attitude of the man who had once been the terror of the Mediterranean pirates was more than equivocal. He had sent Caesar one of his newly formed legions to replace that lost at Aduatuca, but this was his last friendly action; since then a thousand signs bore witness to their gradual estrangement. It was still rumored that Pompeius was still aiming for the dictatorship; by means of a fresh marriage he was entering into the closest relations with the most conservative section of the aristocratic party; and he obviously did nothing to hinder Cato, his new father-in-law, from becoming praetor, or the arch-reactionary Quintus Scipio from being elected Consul, in opposition to Caesar's candidates. The secret reports which Caesar had received from his confidential agents betrayed increasing anxiety. Swift action alone could save the situation; it must be immediate, or it would be too late.

Caesar read the last of the despatches; the hand holding the written sheet fell to his side.

"Make all preparations for the road, Aulus," he said in an expressionless voice: "We shall start tonight."

FIRE!

In the midst of one of his visitor's finest phrases, Caesar suddenly interrupted him:

"May I beg you to come to the point? My time is limited." He had no sooner spoken than he rather repented of his brusqueness: in the long years of warfare he had grown quite unaccustomed to the smooth manners of the Capitol—or had these, during his absence, grown smoother than ever?—and he feared that he might have hurt his visitor's feelings.

But Curio, it seemed, was not so easily offended: from a golden box he extracted a pill, pressed it between his lips, and offered the box to Caesar:

"Would you like one? The latest thing from Rome: sugared health pills. A dealer in the Flaminian Way is selling them, and doing an incredible trade—no?—as you will." He put the box away, crossed his legs, and gazed at Caesar with intelligent, humorous eyes. "To the point then. I am pleased with you, Caesar."

"Very kind of you." Despite his impatience, Caesar could not suppress a smile.

"Yes," repeated Curio, emphatically; "I am pleased with you. For some fifteen years I have been following your career, and I must confess that in that time you have done fabulous things. When one reflects"—he noted a gesture of Caesar's, and interrupted himself: "Yes, I shall have finished soon." He made a wry mouth. "When the sugar is off the pill one comes upon the bitter kernel; but they are said to be very wholesome—very wholesome!" He twinkled significantly.

Caesar, understanding him, responded with a smile.

"I am curious to know what this bitter kernel is composed of."

"Excellent!" said Curio, cheerfully. "It is a pleasure to talk with you; you understand at once what one is driving at.—Well, then, the bitter kernel: You have a whole host of mag-

nificent qualities, Caesar, but you have also a serious defect, which will always be a hindrance to you: you want to do everything yourself, to take everything for yourself; you believe that others are too stupid to be anything more than understrappers." He suddenly changed his tone, and continued urgently: "Speaking seriously, Caesar: the work is bound to become too much for you. You could do everything yourself as long as you were in a humbler position; but today you are a great ruler, and the strategy of your policy keeps you far too busy to attend to tactical details. You need someone who will relieve you of the burden, who will do the petty tasks for you."

Caesar too was suddenly serious.

"There is much in what you say," he said reflectively, "and I have over and over again thought of employing such a man. Only—"

"Only you never took the trouble to find him," Curio eagerly interrupted him. "You waited for such a man to come to you, and you would have gone without him permanently rather than—"

"My attitude was justified;" Caesar, with a smile, in his turn interrupted Curio. "For to all appearances it is your intention to be this man!"

"For that you have only your superhuman luck to thank," retorted Curio, with amusement. "For luck you assuredly have." Again he became serious. "Yes, after all, that is my intention, and I am taking the opportunity of Clodius' death to offer you my services."

"The question would be," said Caesar, hesitating, "of what these services are supposed to consist. Do you too, by any chance, propose to become a leader of a band, and allow yourself to be defeated by a Milo?"

"What an idea!" said Curio, with a violent gesture of dissent. Then, as he noticed that he had disarranged the artificial folds of his toga, he quickly set them in order. "No," he continued, when he had repaired the damage: "that was a senseless affair. Clodius could not have done you a worse

service than allowing that blockhead Milo to stick a knife into his body."

"How so?" Caesar's face was suddenly an impenetrable mask.

Curio eyed him craftily.

"Caesar," he said, "it is useless to play hide and seek with me; I am much too well informed of all the affairs of the political theatre. Or will you deny that for Pompeius, Clodius' death was the long-desired opportunity to act with energy and make himself the master of the situation?"

"With my permission!"

"With your permission! Is it perhaps with your permission that Pompeius and the Senate are of one mind? Is it with your permission that under his silent sufferance a creature of Cato's will probably be chosen for the next Consulate? Is it with your permission"—sternly and weightily he played his trump card—"that Pompeius, on the motion of Bibulus, has been Dictator since the day before yesterday?"

The direct thrust went home: Caesar turned pale.

"Pompeius Dictator? And on the motion of Bibulus?"

"Consul without a colleague," said Curio in confirmation. "And on the motion of your deadly enemy, Marcus Bibulus."

Caesar gazed before him. The thoughts were racing through his mind. Then he raised his head, and with regained composure looked steadily at Curio.

"At all events, you seem to know a good deal. I will ask you once more: of what nature were the services which you proposed to offer me?"

Curio wagged his head deliberately.

"You are fully occupied in Gaul," he said reflectively, "and it is therefore impossible for you to intervene adequately in the affairs of the Capital. It would therefore be in your interest that until further notice all decisions should be avoided. You need someone who is familiar with the machinery of political intrigue, and makes use of it in order to thwart the intentions of your opponents, avowed and secret; who, in a word, will give you time, by delaying mat-

ters until you can appear in person on the scene. I offer to do all this for you, to do it so that no one beside yourself shall have the least suspicion of my procedure."

Caesar had listened attentively; now he answered nonchalantly:

"Your conclusions are quite correct, and cleverly thought out; but they are based on a false hypothesis. You say I am tied in Gaul: that is not so. All is quiet in Gaul, and I can at any time concentrate five legions—half my army—in order to convince you, in Rome, that my views are not without importance."

With increasing surprise Curio followed his words: then he exclaimed:

"Why, then, don't you know—"

"What?" Caesar, scenting trouble, threw up his head.

"That Gaul is in full rebellion!"

The chair flew back and crashed to the floor.

Caesar stood over Curio, bending over him, and shouted:

"What are you telling me?"

Curio too rose to his feet, quite startled by the unexpected outbreak.

"Gaul is in revolt," he repeated. "The first definite news reached Italy yesterday. I was told all the details at the posting-station at Ariminium."

Caesar was scarlet.

"And I hear nothing of it? They do not even take the trouble to inform the responsible governor?" Losing all self-control, he shouted again at Curio: "Speak, man! What do you know? Tell me all you know! Quickly—quickly!"

"In the land of the Carnuti—I think that is their name, in Ga—Ge—"

"Genabum?"

"Yes, Genabum—the garrison was taken by surprise and slaughtered."

"Slaughtered!"

"On the same day all the tribes south of the Liger rose; their forces are moving on the province; the North is be-

ginning to ferment; it is only a matter of days for the revolt to reach the areas which have hitherto been quiet; a leader is said to have arisen among the Arverni to whom the fighting-men are flocking from all directions."

"What is his name? Do you know it?"

Caius shook his head.

"I have forgotten. An unpronounceable, genuinely Gallic name—something ending in *ix*, I think."

Caesar ran to the door.

"Hirtius! Pollio!"

The two came rushing in.

"To horse! My armor! Alarm the cavalry!" He tore the toga from his shoulders, and wriggled his thin, wiry body into the short tunic.

Curio, completely taken aback by this series of outbursts, looked on in silence; he saw the quick-fingered slaves rush into the room, pull the leather jerkin over Caesar's head, and the short breeches over his legs, and replace his light sandals by heavy military boots. In a few minutes the change was effected, and Caesar, not waiting even to fasten his belt, was about to leave the room, carrying his sword in his hand.

Curio quickly intercepted him as he was hurrying to the door.

"What about me?" he cried. "Do you want me—"

Caesar halted for a second. His eyes blazed at the elegant dandy.

"Want you?" he snarled. "Do you suppose, man, that I have time for you?"

He rushed from the room.

ENEMIES ON EVERY HAND!

It was a frantic ride!

Bending almost to the withers of his horse, in order as far as possible to lighten its burden, Caesar swept along the Gallic highways. Behind him was the handful of troopers whom he had chosen to escort him. The trees planted beside

the road fled past him; their rustling swelled in his ears and faded as he trod onwards. Where the highway curved the rider took a short cut, and his horse labored snorting through the snow, and climbing the steep escarpment, returned to the road farther on.

From the accelerated breathing of his horse Caesar realized that this mount also was nearing the end of its strength; he would ride it until it foundered, as he had ridden the other two horses which lay dead on the road from Vienna. He pitied the beast, but he could not help himself. Now only one thing mattered: the utmost possible speed!

What days and nights lay behind him! Swift and sudden action was the very element of his life; but never yet had he ridden such a race as this. First the tiger's spring at Narbo in the Gallic province, where the enemy forces had already threatened to concentrate; then the sudden advance upon the eastern slopes of the Cevennes, where he called out the Helvetian militia, and led his legions of recruits from inexhaustible Transpadana panting after him over mountains six feet deep in snow, in order to pounce like a vulture on the Arverni, trusting in their impregnable ramparts of rock and ice; then, two days later, to Vienna—and from Vienna, in an unbroken gallop, expected by no one, recognized by no one, through the land of the Aedui, which might before long be enemy country, to the territory of the Lingoni, where two legions lay in cantonments.

In Narbo he learned the name of the rebel leader. Vercingetorix. His infallible memory evoked a scene in the assembly at Bibracte—the first Gallic parliament, at which he had been present: the duke of the Arverni, Gobannitio, coming to pay his respects, pushed before him a boy of some fifteen years, who all but devoured Caesar with his glowing eyes. "My nephew Vercingetorix," the duke had stammered—he had evidently learned the words by heart—and the boy had stared and stared. . .

Is that the Vercingetorix? thought Caesar. It was seven years ago. Seven years—and what had not happened since!

Akko had been executed; Indutiomarus had fallen as a rebel; Dumnorix too; Ambiorix, landless, was somewhere beyond the Rhine—and the boy of fifteen was a grown man, and leading the rebellion against Caesar.

In Narbo he heard his name; in the land of the Arverni he heard of his deeds; of the stupendous energy which emanated from this youth of little more than twenty, and which had succeeded in effecting a complete transformation of the Gallic character. Men said that he was as harsh, even as merciless to others as to himself; but they spoke also of his greatness of soul, of the enthusiasm that filled him, and brought all the youth of Gaul flocking to his standard. He was the first to organize his troops after the Roman model, and to accustom them, by minor operations, to hardship and discipline . . . he was the first to create a Gallic army! In its ranks the Cadurci from the South fought beside the Aulerci from the North, and the Pictoni from the West beside the Semoni from the East. From Aquitania, as from the land of the Belgi, from the territory of the Sequani as from that of the Aedui—still nominally friendly to Rome—the volunteers were hurrying to join him. Apart from such portions of Gaul as were not actually occupied by the Roman conqueror he had gathered the whole country into his hand, and had set it ablaze in order that the intruders might be destroyed in the general conflagration.

He had set Gaul ablaze! The word was to be taken only too literally; for nothing proved his magical power over men's minds more than the fact that not a voice was raised to oppose his resolve to lay waste the whole country, and to burn the towns, in order to starve out the Romans, since he could not destroy them with the sword. For once again, he was the first among the Gauls to recognize the infinite importance of the commissariat—to realize that ill-fed troops are already half defeated.

What a man! thought Caesar, again and again. What a man! What a pity that he is not on my side, that I am forced to fight him!

The highway fled beneath his horse's hooves. Caesar knew the neighborhood only too well; he needed no guide to shew him the way. Two days ago they had passed Matisco, where seven years earlier he had first come into contact with the Helvetii; only yesterday they had ridden over the frozen Arar, where he had destroyed their rearguard; on the left, in the distance, Bibracte emerged, the site of his first victory on Gallic soil, and later, to the right, a lofty hill fort, Alesia, which he had subjected to a prolonged siege, in order to hold all the Gallic territory between Alesia and Vesontio as in a vise.—His third horse had foundered long ago, but the little company rode onward, and ever onward.

Here were bare, wintry woods; he was nearing the great forests of the North. The land was empty of human life; even from the few hamlets through which they passed the inhabitants had fled—a sign that the Roman troops were not far distant, for the natives still avoided them as fire avoids water; when the one came, the other retired.

At last, late in the afternoon, they saw the first outpost. Two men halted on a hill, gazed at the approaching party, and disappeared. Caesar nodded; the watchfulness of his men filled him with satisfaction.

An hour later the highway was barred by a couple of squadrons. While they were still distant the commander flung up his hand, signing to them to halt. Caesar, reining his horse in to a walk, rode on.

Amazed recognition was followed by a loud and joyful greeting:

"Caesar!"

On the way to the camp Caesar questioned the young military tribune. The surprised young officer assured him that he knew of nothing untoward: in the neighborhood of the camp all was perfectly quiet; there was nothing suspicious to be noted. No disquieting news had been received from the other legions, although, in obedience to Caesar's orders, all were in constant touch with one another.

This especially gave Caesar food for thought: how deep

must the movement go if it could induce the boastful Gauls to hold their tongues to such purpose that not a single man had blabbed!

Half an hour later he was in camp.

Outstretched on Trebonius' bed, he surrendered his rigid muscles to the fingers of the Egyptian masseur, while he kept as many of the officers of the two legions as were able to write shorthand fully occupied. Half an hour later his couriers were hurrying out of the camp gates: westward to Agedincum, where Labienus was stationed with his six legions, and northward to Fabius, who with two legions was occupying the territory of the Treveri. Then Caesar slept the leaden sleep of profound exhaustion, his forehead covered with cold perspiration, which the Egyptian wiped away as it formed.

Yet in the morning he was as fresh as though he had rested a fortnight. As soon as he was in the saddle he ordered the alarm to be sounded; and then, following the courier who had ridden westward the night before, the legions marched out of the camp.

At Agedincum the brigades of Fabius and Trebonius joined the main army. Caesar sighed with relief, and the forced cheerfulness of his features, which concealed his secret anxiety, gave place to a look that seemed the expression of an inward fire, which his soldiers knew well as a sign that fresh achievements lay ahead of them.

The royal tiger was ready to try conclusions with the Gallic wolf.

It was not a moment too soon; for Vercingetorix realized at once that his great plan of defeating the general and his army separately had miscarried. Only now did he show his true greatness; his clear, unerring insight left him not a moment in doubt; he was not equal to meeting Caesar. So he slunk around the kingly tiger, here snapping unexpectedly at his flank, and there flying at his neck, but never allowing himself to be caught, or forced into a decisive battle.

It was a war in the dark; sentries were slaughtered, patrols and couriers disappeared without leaving a trace, transports were captured; and it corroded Caesar's nerves, already sufficiently shaken, as acid eats into steel. With eight legions he stormed furiously southwards, striking out with his terrible talons. But the blows met with no resistance; four towns indeed were destroyed, and among them the town in which the rebellion had broken out, and which now received its overwhelming punishment—but the man for whom these blows were intended always avoided them in time, hurrying through the devastated land, and rallying such tribes as were yet hesitating. Among the Aedui the ferment was increasing from day to day, and hardly had Caesar left the territory of the Senones when they, and the Parisii, the Veliocassi, and the rest of the river peoples, took up arms against the Romans. With his object unachieved, Caesar was forced to fall back on his base at Agedincum.

What he had been so anxious to avoid was now inevitable; he was compelled to divide his forces. Four legions, under Labienus, retreated along the Sequana, in order to join the troops of the main army in that area, while with the other six legions Caesar once more struck southwards, into the very heart of the conspiracy, into the land of the Arverni, which its young king Vercingetorix, the leader of united Gaul, could not, for the sake of his reputation, fail to defend: for here Caesar hoped at last that he would bring his great adversary to bay.

GERGOVIA

Even the Tenth could do no more. . .

Exhausted by forced marches, and the superhuman efforts of the last few days, during which they had been fighting, on unfavorable, hilly ground, with an enemy in overpowering strength, and excellently entrenched, they had now been engaged for hours in desperate hand-to-hand fighting, incapable of advancing by a single foot; their personal valor, their desperate endeavors to assume the offensive, were all in

vain; in vain their repeated attempts, amidst an uninterrupted hail of missiles, to approach the great fortifications; they had to content themselves with holding the ground they had won, and were thankful that they were not hurled back down the precipitous slope.

This was before Gergovia, where Caesar had at last succeeded in forcing Vercingetorix to fight. Supported by the great hill-fortress, an enemy worthy of his steel received the Roman attack; the legions advanced like angry billows, and with heavy losses retired like an ebbing flood; in vain they shook the iron rods with which the Gaul had barred the way; these held fast, and the attackers hung to them bleeding, exhausting the best of their strength in the hopeless struggle.

Almost weeping with rage, Caesar—how many times had he done so already?—dashed round to the left wing, his red Imperator's cloak wrapped round his left arm in place of a shield, and his sword in his right hand. Despite all the reports from the fighting line, despite his own real conviction, he would not believe that anything could hold up his, *his* Tenth Legion! He rushed into the front ranks, and with his own hands thrust the eagle-bearer onwards, until he almost felt the enemy's breath on his face—and yet was compelled to fall back with the rest. They fell back only so far as they had leapt forward—but they fell back!

Recovering his breath behind the lines of the legion, he glanced towards the right. He noted the desperate position in which his storming-troops found themselves: having, at the first assault, advanced too far, three legions were plastered against the city wall, the target of the stones and arrows of more than one party of defenders; the Ninth, who were nearest to them, were holding out best; they had found cover in a coppice, and were warding off attack after attack; the Fourteenth, at the end of the right wing, were pressed into the dead angles of the wall, like climbers unable to descend; they had no way of retreat, but they were to all appearances, in no great danger; the rivals of the Tenth, however, the Eighth Legion, were in a much worse position; they had

resolved to show that they were the equals of the crack legion, and had, without orders, attempted to storm one of the main gates, and after an initial success had been so dealt with by the main body of the defenders that they were suddenly thrown into seemingly hopeless disorder. Every man was fighting for himself where he stood, and fighting the hardest battle that had ever befallen them on Gallic soil.

And not a man could be sent to their assistance! The Fifteenth were too far away; they had been ordered to make a demonstration, and in any case they would arrive too late —for the next few minutes must usher in the decision—and the Thirteenth, under Sextius, constituted the all too scanty garrison of the camp, from which no more men could be drawn.

Once more Caesar's eyes swept the slope on which the Tenth were preparing again to storm the defences. He saw that the attack would be futile; once more blood would be vainly shed that was as dear to him as his own. With outstretched hand he staggered forwards, seized a bugler by the shoulder, and panted:

"Sound the recall!"

Incredulous and uncomprehending, the man stared at him. He repeated the order, and it was like the cry of a man who has been dealt a mortal wound:

"The recall!"

The signal pealed out, and was repeated by the buglers of the other cohorts. In the ranks which were already on the point of leaping forward there was hesitation, and a momentary paralysis; and then the Tenth retreated a little way, in perfect order, exhausted but unbroken; and now, withdrawn from the turmoil of battle, their eyes sought those of the Imperator.

Had not the troops yonder heard the signal? The Eighth, the Ninth, the Fourteenth remained in their positions, although the troops released by the withdrawal of the Tenth were beginning to reinforce the main body of the enemy. Were they crazy? They must retreat while there was yet

time, before the Gallic counter-attack was developed which was momently to be expected!

At Caesar's orders all the buglers of the Tenth ran out before the ranks, and sounded the signal once more, blowing simultaneously with all the force of their lungs. Their instruments, tuned to different pitches, produced a horrible discord.

In vain: the troops yonder were perhaps already in the frame of mind in which men neither see nor hear, and are conscious only of what lies immediately before them. With bitten, bleeding lips Caesar was about to order his legion to go forward to the relief of the hard-pressed troops. . .

And then, on the right wing, Gallic troops appeared: the contingent of Aeduic auxiliaries, which Caesar had thrown against the enemy's flank, in order to relieve the pressure on the legions. But their appearance had the converse effect: in their mental confusion the legionaries took them for enemies (and were perhaps not very far wrong!): the Fourteenth began to give ground and pour back; the Eighth joined them, and then the Ninth; and suddenly the whole slope was covered with retreating soldiers. And at the same moment the Gallic troops, realizing that their moment had come, began to pour out of the fortress, falling upon the legions and proceeding to cut their way into them.

There were cries of rage and dismay behind Caesar, who with flashing eyes was following the catastrophe. He turned round: to see frenzied faces, to hear voices that implored him to help, to take charge of the situation. Mutely he stretched out his hand, which still grasped the hilt of his sword, and pointed with it to the monstrous and confused mass of combatants whirling down the hillside. Then the whole of the Tenth Legion, the Imperator's Legion, set off at the double.

Half-way up the slope they plunged, a living sword, into the great confused mêlée, transfixing it and holding it fast. The human sword bent under the stupendous pressure, but it resisted; the fugitives won some precious moments, which enabled them to retreat without constantly feeling the Gallic

swords at their backs, and finally to extricate themselves. The three legions were saved.

But now the Tenth Legion was in an even worse position than before. Their furious charge had driven them deep into the body of the enemy: and now on every side the Gauls turned on the intruders, flinging themselves on the Romans as boar-hounds fling themselves on a boar. Whole palisades of Gallic swords flashed up and sank down, flashed up again and again fell, biting their way through bronze and wood, through flesh and bone.

Never had Caesar fought as he fought today; his sword whirled in flashing circles, engaging three or four enemy blades at once, delivering here a sudden stab, and there a lightning cut. But the enemy swords grew ever thicker: flashing more and more furiously, they flickered before his eyes so that he could see nothing but their incessant flashes; closer and closer the circle closed round him; a hand, then another, then three, then four snatched at his right hand from behind, seized it, and forced it open, finger by finger, while he struck out like a madman with the arm that was swathed in his mantle; his sword fell, and was caught up, and tossed from hand to hand like a piece of wood dancing on the waves of an angry sea. Arms encircled him, and dragged him away, despite his desperate resistance; the roar of the battle began to grow more distant; in vain he tried to gain a purchase on the ground with his feet; a noose was slipped over his wrists, and cords began to bind his arms against his sides. Beside himself with rage, he snapped with his teeth at the broad brown throat before him, and bit into it, and felt the sweetish, sickly taste of hot blood in his mouth.

And suddenly everything came to a standstill. Shouts, and the dry, thrilling clash of meeting blades; the vortex whose centre he constituted swayed heavily to and fro, and was torn apart—and he stood alone, staggering, the broken cords still about his wrists. And then—brown faces under Roman helmets, and inarticulate shouts of rejoicing; and again he was in the midst of his own Tenth, who gazed at him with

moist eyes, almost howling with joy because they had rescued their Imperator.

This is hell! he thought. We must go down!

He looked about him with bewildered eyes: a fresh detachment, orderly as on the parade-ground, was coming up the hill at the double. Mechanically he counted: three, four, five cohorts: half a legion. The Thirteenth, he thought. Sextius is staking half the garrison to save the day. He saw the salvo of throwing-spears whizz forwards with splendid precision; he saw plainly the sudden jerk with which all the men simultaneously drew their swords; he saw the Gauls brought to a standstill: he saw them give way, and hastily retreat behind their walls and earthworks.

Severely battered, but relieved of pressure, and in good order, the Tenth Legion began the retirement. The Gauls too had had enough. The camp received the returning troops, and gave them what they needed above all things at the moment: rest and protection. All had passed off better than one could have expected: the losses were heavy, but not irreparable; not a single eagle had been lost, not a single troop destroyed.

But Caesar's sword was in the enemy's hands, and he had for the first time been defeated in open battle. . .

CAESAR'S SWORD

Back again to Agedincum!

It was a march through a smouldering country, a land of deadly hatred. From behind the next rise of the ground the Gallic cavalry might suddenly emerge, to charge, shrieking, down on the legionaries; from the next wood a cloudburst of arrows might fall upon them. Everything was hostile: the spring storms that howled over the stubble of last year's harvest—for where in all Gaul had an acre been sown this year?—and lashed the soldiers' faces with driving rain, and the surface of the sodden Gallic highways, on which the weary feet slipped and stumbled.

The last hope had vanished. Nowhere in all the wide, wide

country had the Romans a friend left; even the Aedui had joined the great movement, had been swept away by the mighty avalanche, and not the least among their leaders was Divitiacus, who had so long been loyal, but who was now bent on avenging his brother's death!

It was an unprecedented and hazardous enterprise that the six legions had undertaken, and Caesar had hesitated long before he resolved to risk it. Defeated and half-starved, the troops were moving away from the Roman province, and marching northwards through a country from which they might never return.

But it was a question of rescuing their comrades, and so the utmost must be ventured. In the north-west were Labienus and his four legions, out of touch with the rest of the legions, without news of them. If they did not come to his help, if they withdrew into the adjacent province, thinking only of their own salvation, he would be irretrievably lost in the disordered, victory-drunken country; and with him twenty thousand men, the whole of the transport, the vast magazines, the treasures—everything.

So they marched northward, step by step, half dead of fatigue, and yet full of a desperate resolution. At night they employed their last remnant of strength in throwing up entrenchments, and fell to the ground where they stood, and slept the oppressive sleep of exhaustion; in the morning they stood up unrefreshed, unrested, only to march on again with their hastily-packed impedimenta.

In the midst of his soldiers, on a jaded, stumbling horse, rode Caesar. Since the defeat of Gergovia he had spoken only when speech was not to be avoided; the rest of the time he spent in sullen silence. His bearing was slack, his glance lustreless and clouded. At night, when the watch went their rounds through the profoundly slumbering camp, they saw the light glimmering for hours from his tent, and when it was extinguished they heard stifled sighs and groans, like those of a man oppressed by tormenting dreams.

The black day of Gergovia had hit him hard. That he,

the insuperable, should be beaten by a half-savage people; that he should be forced to retire from a battle defeated, corroded his heart and filled him with a sullen, overpowering rage. There were hours when he wished he could take the whole Gallic land between his teeth and tear it—as he had torn the Gallic throat into which he had sunk his teeth when taken prisoner; but there were other hours—and these were a thousand times worse—when he longed to cast everything from him; to ride through the burning country, as he had once ridden, but now in the reverse direction, careless of all that he was surrendering, and to take refuge in some quiet, silent corner, and put all knowledge from his mind.

Worst of all, however, was the loss of his sword. It was a blue steel blade, inlaid with gold—it came from Asia, and was probably of Indian workmanship—which his uncle Marius had given him when he was no more than a boy. On all his travels, in all his campaigns it had been his faithful companion. He had struck the first blow with it at Mytilene; he had worn it in Spain, and wielded it in all the battles of the Gallic, British and Germanic wars, and he cherished it with a romantic, almost superstitious love. It was his truest and most trusty friend; it was for him the expression and symbol of the will to victory that filled him, of the irresistible urge that drove him onwards. Now it adorned the girddle of some Gallic chieftain, perhaps of Vercingetorix himself, and at his side, in deliberate self-torment, he wore the empty scabbard, so that all his soldiers might see that even a general can lose his sword.

Noviodunum, the chief intermediate post on the Elaver, was lost: in the hands of the Aedui. Learning this in time, he swerved aside, following a more northerly direction. Camp after camp was struck, and day after day he sent out his cavalry patrols to look for their comrades. Would he find them?

He did find them. One day his tired, emaciated scouts, drooping in the saddles of their half-dead horses, encountered horsemen in no better case: the patrols of Labienus.

They announced that the northern army-group had successfully accomplished its task, and was marching on Agedincum, the appointed place of meeting.

The two armies reached it almost simultaneously. The famishing soldiers flung themselves on the still well-filled store-houses as though storming a town. Only with the greatest difficulty was it possible to save the irreplaceable stores from being plundered, and to restore discipline which had become dangerously relaxed. Then the troops enjoyed a few days' rest, and with full stomachs the soldiers began to recover their spirits.

Nevertheless, and despite Labienus' favorable report, Caesar decided to retire. How long would the provisions last? At most two months. If before them no decisive action had been fought—and how should it be, in view of the feline elasticity of the enemy—and he still remained in hostile territory, cut off from all possible assistance, he would perish with all his troops; it was better, then, to retire to the impregnable Vesontio, and, after his army was completely recuperated, to venture once more to advance. He had now no sword, and he must first make himself a new one.

This thought became subsequently a fixed idea with him: all purposes, hopes and plans were centred in the little piece of steel which he had been forced to leave in the hands of the enemy. From his right hand, which burned as though he had plunged it into the fire, a scalding stream flowed straight into his heart, destroying all effective energy, all belief in himself. A sword—he must have a sword, or Gaul was lost to him!

So, with all his troops, he marched back along the way which he had covered, months before, during his desperate race northwards. They passed the winter camp of Trebonius; once more Alesia appeared on the horizon, and the long-drawn column slowly approached the Arar. It was unopposed; no enemy was visible, not even the smallest scouting-party; and nevertheless—or perhaps for that very reason, since the memory of the battle with the Nervii and the

catastrophe of Aduatuca had branded itself indelibly on all men's hearts—they were all conscious of the feeling which had possessed them ever since the battle of Gergovia: that the enemy might appear over the next rise of the ground, might break out of the next wood: lusting for blood, overwhelming, merciless!

This feeling had not misled them. One morning the advanced cavalry patrols came racing back to the main body; they had barely time to report the proximity of the enemy. Close on their heels roared the endless torrent, breaking on the head and flanks of the marching legions: the Gallic cavalry.

There was no time to deploy. The baggage-train was brought into the midst of the army; right and left a front was formed, and the whole of the cavalry, including the newly-raised heavy German horse, was thrown forward. Then, like a thunderclap, the enemy attacked.

Now that Caesar once more had his enemy before him he completely regained his composure. From a hill to the rear of the army, surrounded by his staff, he overlooked the whole battle. Only one thing oppressed him, and furtively his hand felt for his empty scabbard. If only he had a sword!

Suddenly he started, bent forward in his saddle, and narrowed his eyes: had not the far-flung army on which he was gazing the shape of a sword? Could there be a better cutting edge than the extended front of his cohorts, a stronger point than his heavy cavalry, who were even now delivering a mighty thrust into the enemy ranks? An inexpressible sense of bliss leapt up within him like a sudden flame; the burning stream of torment ebbed from his heart; vast and nameless energies poured into him like a cataract, filling him to overflowing; his right arm rose into the air, the hand clenched as though it gripped a hilt—Caesar had found his sword again!

And now that he felt it in his hand again he showed that he knew how to use it: a short, violent blow to the right, and the enemy staggered back in disorder; another to the left, with the same result: now a lunge with the point, the whole

living sword following, driving itself into the wavering and then fleeing masses of the enemy; thrusting here, biting there, until the Gauls lost their heads, and ran, and ran, conscious only of their longing to escape the fury of that pitiless weapon. In a quarter of an hour all was over. Caesar rode forward, erect and rigid, with blazing eyes. His soldiers looked at him in delighted astonishment. In his path lay the sword of a fallen legionary. He pointed to it; someone stooped and handed it up to him. With beating heart he gazed on it: this sword of the simple, common man, this symbol of the might of his legions, was for him a better guarantee of victory and final success than all the costly products of the smithies of Asia.

He raised the sword, and pointed with it to the hostile crowd that was eddying toward Alesia:

"After them!"

THE TIDE TURNS

The negotiations were concluded, and the final armistice arranged. Vain was the desperate defence of the wolf Vercingetorix in the trap of Alesia; in vain the reckless onslaught of the great army sent to relieve it, which for five days and nights without a pause stormed Caesar's intrenchments: the powerful defences, perfected within and without by all the expedients of military art, proved impregnable against the twofold assault. The waves of Gallic troops from all parts of the country flowed back and ebbed away, and the famishing garrison of the fortress, having no further hope of rescue, was forced to surrender.

Caesar's conditions were milder than might have been expected: the surrender of all weapons and the delivery of hostages; he wished, apparently, to spare the besieged, being as weary of punishment as he was of battle, but on one condition he insisted, and to this the shattered Gauls agreed: they must surrender their leader, the king of the Arverni, Vercingetorix.

Caesar, wishing to convince the Gauls of the insuperable

might of Rome, had resolved to make the act of capitulation the occasion of a magnificent military spectacle. All the ten legions stood to arms; from the main door of the fortress to the parade ground of the camp was a close-set palisade of legionaries, every man fully armed, his helmet on his head, his shield on his left arm, and his grounded spear in his right hand. Men and officers alike wore all their decorations, and even the colors of the cohorts were decorated with green foliage. The cavalry was drawn up in two deep columns to the right and the left of the main gate. With dull astonishment the Germanic horsemen, gigantic and uncouth, stationed in the front ranks, gazed at all the pomp and splendour, stared at the detachments which continued to pour out of the camp, moving to their positions with the heavy, regular marching step of the legionary, heard the shrill signals of the buglers, and patted, with embarrassed smiles the shoulders of their heavy charges, gaily decked out in honor of the day. They felt as though they had fallen into the works of one of the monstrous Roman war-legions, at which they had stared, open-mouthed and uncomprehending, in Caesar's camp, and obeyed their orders with unusual submissiveness.

On the parade ground of the camp the display of pomp and splendor reached its climax. A wooden platform had been hastily built, covered with blankets and lengths of cloth, and decorated with heavy garlands of foliage. On the steps of the platform, artistically grouped, lay all the captured Gallic colors and emblems—an incalculable number—the tokens of final victory. Above them was the chair of the Imperator, thickly entwined with half-withered garlands of laurel—some store-keeper had brought it with him from Italy and preserved it through the winter—and shaded by fresh boughs which were spread above it like a canopy.

But the rarest adornments of the parade-ground were the ten eagles of the legions, gleaming golden in the spring sunlight, five on either side of the Imperator's throne, their wings and beaks stretching triumphantly skywards—they and the cohorts of the Tenth who formed the guard of

honor—the Tenth, which was indeed today what it had called itself, in jesting pride, ever since the beginning of the campaign; Caesar's bodyguard.

One side of the great square had been left free; now it gradually began to fill; one by one the Gauls came forward—none of his own free will, but in obedience to Caesar's commands—and were shown to their places with cold, scant courtesy by the military tribunes and centurions: they were the Gallic dukes and counts, but lately free men and rulers of their people. Here were those who were friendly to Caesar, and those who were hostile: today no distinction was made. In huddled groups they stared, abashed and melancholy, over the shoulders of the legionaries who stood, a living barrier, before them, at the sunlit, sandy square on which the final scene of the Gallic tragedy was to be enacted. Their faces were colorless, and not one of them succeeded in maintaining an easy bearing; for each felt on his own cheek the lash of annihilating shame which Caesar was laying across the face of the whole Gallic nation.

As yet Caesar had not appeared; he was lingering with the senior officers in the generals' tent. Now and again one or another came out, beckoned to a waiting orderly, dismissed him with an order, and disappeared again within the tent. The spectators waited in silence.

Suddenly, from the hill fort, came the sound of a bugle, ringing distinctly on the pure, clear air. All eyes turned upwards; the gate of the fort opened, and a single figure became visible: a rider on a white horse.

The same bugle-call rang out close at hand. The spectators turned their heads: ten buglers stood before the generals' tent, scattering the shrill tones into the spring air. The curtains of the tent parted, and were drawn back on either side; Caesar, followed by his generals, advanced on to the parade-ground.

For this great day he was attired with fitting splendor: his harness, his greaves, and the broad bracelets on his wrists were of gold. His soft leathern boots were encrusted with

gems, and so was the scarlet mantle which hung from his shoulders to his heels. A curious contrast to this splendor was offered by the simple legionary's sword, which hung from an old, patched baldrick in a battered, copper-bound scabbard.

The other officers were hardly less splendid; here was a glitter and a glory as though the gods themselves had descended in a golden cloud from the Capitol. Godlike too was the proud, unapproachable majesty of their faces, on which a reflection of all this brilliance shone: the beautiful and sculpturesque features of Labienus; the degenerate tiger-face of Fabius; the wooden countenance of Trebonius; the face of Quintus Cicero, now restored to a lunar roundness: the bold, youthful profile of Marcus Antonius—who had joined the army shortly before Alesia—the narrow, elegant and rather foolish horse-like features of Basilus, and the faces of Roscius, Sextius, Plancus, Sulpicius, Vocatius, and the many others who followed them.

On Caesar's face alone there was no radiance. Harsh and immobile, its olive-brown features above the shimmer of his golden harness, were like thunder clouds in a morning sun. Slowly his gloomy gaze swept along the living palisade, and out at the gate, and further still, until it fastened on the rider who was now about half-way down the hill-path.

For a moment or two, amidst absolute silence, Caesar's thunderous gaze enveloped the solitary horseman. Then the Imperator turned upon his heel, walked with measured tread to the platform, raised his foot, and brought it down heavily on the first step—and on the stave of the Gallic standard that lay slanting across the step. The stave cracked under the heavy tread, and broke.

A shudder passed through the company of Gallic lords, who stood close-packed in the midst of the legionaries, and a faint moan that was terrible to hear. With blazing eyes all gazed on the maltreated standard, that had rolled from the steps into the dust.

Caesar did not seem to have noticed it. With an unmoved

expression he ascended the rest of the steps, and took his seat in the arm-chair, staring along the track that led direct to the camp gate. The generals had grouped themselves about him on the platform.

Some minutes elapsed—and to the Gallic lords they seemed endless. The solitary rider had disappeared into the ravine; as before, the way leading to the city lay empty in the sunlight.

Then, from without the wall, just outside the camp gate, sounded the quick, irregular hoof-beats of an excited, shying horse. All stretched their necks to see what was happening.

The dancing clatter ceased, and was replaced by the rhythmical beat of hooves; in the gateway Vercingetorix appeared, towering in his saddle, armed from head to foot. His head was protected by a gaily-decorated helmet, his broad breast was enclosed in a cuirass of dark scale-armor, and at his belt hung the long Gallic sword; on his left arm was his shield, and in his left hand his lance, while his right held the reins of his now docile charger. His face was impassive and stony as that of his great enemy; his eyes, like Caesar's gazed straight before him. So he rode, step by step, with the sun glittering on the polished metal of his accoutrements, up the track that led from the camp gate to Caesar's throne: the last path trodden by Gallic freedom.

Now that he had reached the platform he hesitated; he seemed about to pull up his horse, but then, giving it the rein, he turned it with a slight pressure of his thigh. The splendid, perfectly-trained thoroughbred obeyed on the instant, and swerved aside.

There was a faint whispering in the ranks: this was something unforeseen! Uncertain whether they should intervene, the legionaries looked at Caesar. He sat immovable as before; not a muscle of his face, not a finger had so much as quivered; so they, too, quietly waited.

Vercingetorix rode round the platform. Slower and slower grew the paces of his horse, as though the steed and his rider were loath to part. Now he was once more in front of Caesar;

he pulled up his mount with a sudden jerk, wheeled it with rein and thigh until he was facing Caesar, and halted it.

The eyes of the rider and the eyes of the man on the throne gazed into one another for so long that all who saw them felt almost as though the two men were changed into bronze, into statues of themselves.

Then, with a sudden resolve, Vercingetorix sprang from the saddle, unbuckled his sword-belt, took his sword in the left hand that already held his lance, and with his right lifted his helmet from his head. He stooped, about to lay them all at the foot of the platform; then he stopped. The weapons fell clanging to the ground, and with both hands he grasped the broken stave of the standard and lifted it to his lips.

DEDICATED TO THE GODS

THE ride across Gaul was no triumphant procession, and Caesar had never required of the finally conquered country that it should assume such a form. Now that the clash of weapons was at last silent he felt the need of proceeding as indulgently as possible. The nation which had submitted voluntarily and unconditionally received its prisoners again without indemnity; the native system of government was either unaltered, or, where change was unavoidable, was adapted with the greatest consideration to the new conditions.

But the taxes, of course, which had formerly swelled the private fortunes of the native magnates, now flowed into the Roman state treasury, where they caused a veritable spring tide; and Caesar's legions remained in the country. From the land of the Treveri in the extreme north-east to that of the Ruteni in the south, on the borders of the province, ran a chain of winter camps, binding Gaul indissolubly to Rome.

The inspection of these camps was part of the purpose of Caesar's journey. Starting from the territory of the Aedui, where he had concentrated his main forces—six legions were stationed in a small area surrounding Bibracte and Vesontio—he visited first the cantonments on the Mosella, and then rode

southwards, ever southwards, crossing and recrossing the military road followed on the last campaign.

He rode, as was his custom, with only a small retinue, without the pomp and splendor which he might have displayed as Imperator, and had displayed in such extravagant measure at the capitulation of Alesia; he had no wish to make an impression, to excite attention; on the contrary, the less notice he attracted the better pleased he was. He sent his billeting officers on in advance, to find some farm or country house that lay as far as possible from the frequented woods; he rode into the courtyard as night was falling, and rode away again in the early morning. His meals he took in the open, or in some little hamlet, for in seven long years of campaigning it had become second nature to do so; meat broiled on the spit, and hard bread which he had drawn, like any legionary, from the stores of the last garrison inspected, were all his diet. Those who chanced to meet the company on the road without being told that Caesar was among the horsemen would never have recognized him.

He visited Agedincum, where he had concentrated his forces, and whence, after the defeat before Gergovia, he had begun the retreat which had ended in such an unprecedented victory; Vellaunodonum, which was just beginning to rise again from the ashes; Alesia, round which the gigantic field fortifications were beginning slowly to crumble; Avaricum, already wholly the Roman military colony, where Sextius, the savior of Gergovia, received him at the head of his Thirteenth Legion; and Gergovia itself, whose gates had been so long and so stubbornly defended, but were now flung wide in welcome.

The territory of the Arverni, the land of his great enemy, had suffered less from the war than was to be expected; here too, indeed—as all over Gaul—the harvest was destroyed; here too the highway was bordered with burned farms and villages; but everywhere the will to reconstruct was evident, everywhere hands were busily erasing the blemishes which

the war had left on the fair face of the countryside; in a few years' time the events of this bloody year would be no more than a tale, the stuff of such stories as old people love to tell the children by the fireside on winter evenings.

It may be that the landscape that greeted his eyes was more peaceful and friendly than Caesar had expected, inasmuch as the woods and groves were still standing; for the trees belonged to the gods, who loved their green, transparent shadows, and were therefore inviolable; and so their boughs were still outspread as in consolation, and their eternal rustling spoke at once of the passing and the enduring of all earthly things.

On a warm afternoon of late summer the little company encamped on the edge of such a grove. Caesar himself, in well-chosen terms, for he now spoke Gallic like a native, had asked the Druid who came forward out of the darkness of the wood for permission to rest their awhile; and the old, white-clad priest had given the required leave with rigid courtesy, and had then withdrawn once more into the heart of the wood. Was it a natural love of solitude, intensified by long habit, or unwillingness to come into close contact with these aliens, that had called him back into the grove? No one asked the question, least of all Caesar; the old man was free to go his way, unhindered and unmolested.

Caesar, with a sigh of content, breathed in the peace of the hour. While the majority of his escort had strayed into the grove, exploring it in all directions in cheerful curiosity, he himself lay down at the edge of the wood, with his back supported by the trunk of a broad and shady lime-tree, and gazed with dreamy eyes over the sunlit landscape. A thousand pleasant and kindly thoughts rose into his mind. He had learned to love the soil of this country as though he himself had sprung from it; he felt himself to be one with it: he had thought to conquer it, but it had conquered him, had taken him into its strong arms and made him its own. He was no poet, yet in this leisure hour an artless hexameter

had occurred to him, which he repeated softly to himself with an indulgent smile:

"The murderous sword is replaced by the nobler iron of the ploughshare."

There was a sudden clamor in the wood: voices were hailing one another, and quickly drawing nearer. Aroused from his peaceful mood, Caesar looked up with annoyance, and sprang to his feet. The steely tension returned which through seven endless years had strained nerve and muscle almost beyond endurance, and which he had been so thankful to relax for a moment. With knitted brows he peered into the heart of the wood.

He had not long to wait: in among the tree-trunks his staff and escort, laughing and shouting, were advancing in disorder. He was about to shout a question, but they had seen him; they were calling to him, beckoning and pointing. He could distinguish only two words in the confused clamor of voices, and he could not guess their significance:

"Your sword!"

An impatient gesture, and the noisy company halted before him, breathless. He turned to Hirtius, who was laughing all over his face:

"What is it?"

"We have found your sword, Caesar!" said Hirtius, quickly. "It is in the wood there, hanging on a tree!"

Caesar stared at him in amazement; then, shaking his head, he entered the wood. Each was eager to be his guide. With cheery shouts they hurried some two hundred paces into the wood, and halted in a clearing.

All the tree-trunks round the clearing were thickly hung with weapons: Gallic, Germanic, Roman. The long broadsword of the Suebi; beside the short walking-sword of the legions; the Cimbrian hide shield beside the Aeduic horseman's buckler; the pilum beside the long cavalry lance. Most of these weapons were rusted and decayed, but some were barely tarnished. This was one of the places where the Gauls

preserved the weapons which they had captured, dedicating them to the gods as a sacrificial gift.

On either side of one of the trees two soldiers had of their own accord posted themselves as sentries. In the right hand of each was his own naked sword, while with his left hand each of the soldiers was holding off the Druid, who was silently but obstinately struggling to force his way between them and the tree.

Caesar's gaze followed the pointing fingers. Slowly he drew nearer. There he saw it with his own eyes: held by a couple of staples, there it shone, steel-blue and gold: the splendid sword which he had borne and drawn in all his battles, until he lost it at Gergovia. Deeply moved, with throbbing heart he gazed at his recovered friend. Not a word was spoken.

"Shall we take it down?" It was Hirtius who at last ventured to break the silence, taking a step towards the tree.

"It is dedicated to the gods!" cried the Druid indignantly.

Caesar, with outstretched hand, waved his adjutant back. He took one long last look at the darkly gleaming sword, and then said quietly:

"No: let it hang there: it shall guard Gaul for me."

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE IMPERATOR.

"Yes, mother—" and Caesar, his interlaced fingers resting in his lap, gazed thoughtfully into the open fire on the hearth—"there have been great changes."

The three of them—Caesar, his Transpadanian friend Caburus, and Caburus' wife, had had a long talk, discussing past events; and it was to these that Caesar's words related. But they might equally well have referred to his immediate environment, for here too there had been great changes. Not so much in the room in which they were sitting—for houses age slowly and imperceptibly—but in its occupants, on whose faces and figures experience had left ineradicable traces.

He was alone with the husband and wife. The figure of the master of the house was almost as erect as of old—almost, for on closer scrutiny one saw that his back was slightly rounded, his neck a little bowed, as though he was carrying an invisible burden; that the thick hair was now snow-white, and the clear, keen eyes paler, as though bleached by the burning suns of almost seven decades.

The housewife too had aged: her body was flaccid, her face wrinkled; with the hasty, pattering steps of an old woman she hurried indefatigably to and fro, anxious to make her beloved guest as comfortable as ever she could.

The children were absent. Valeria, the daughter, had left home several years ago; she was now, Caesar learned, the wife of a neighboring landowner, and the happy mother of two children. Procillus was working in the fields; his father had handed over to him the reins which his ageing hands were no longer strong enough to hold; but he would come home at twilight, and would be glad to see his old commander, whom he had followed in the first Germanic campaign; but Donnotaurus, the second son, would return no more; he was sleep-

ing his eternal sleep on the frontier of the province, in the country of the Helvetian tribes, which he had thrown against one of the terrible storming-columns of Vercingetorix. Caesar, to spare his friend's feelings, had carefully refrained from asking after him.

"Men are more than I can understand," said the old woman, shaking her head, in answer to Caesar's words. "No peace! No rest!"

"What I do not understand," interposed Caburus, "is precisely what the quarrel has been about these last few months."

"That is very simple," replied Caesar, shrugging his shoulders. "Because this is the only time they can get hold of me. As the law stands, I cannot for the second time become a candidate for the Consulate until ten years have elapsed after my first tenure of the office: that is, until next year; and to safeguard myself in the meantime—for there are plenty of people in Rome who would like to have my head—I had myself appointed governor of Gaul for these ten years—of course, with the corresponding military authority; and now my enemies assert that this post falls vacant on the first of March, while I claim to hold it until I enter on my term as Consul, or at least until the elections. The quarrel is over this period of six or nine months; if I succeed in insisting on my point I am saved; for no one will take proceedings against a man who has been elected Consul, or has actually entered upon his term of office as Consul."

"Now I understand," said Caburus. "If your enemies get their way, from the first of March you are a private citizen, and defenceless."

"Defenceless against the law," amended Caesar. "Or in their opinion defenceless," he continued, correcting himself. Caburus looked at him inquiringly. A faint flush rose into Caesar's face. Hesitating, as though he feared his own words, he added: "For this is the question—whether I owe obedience to a resolution of the Senate which I regard as illegal."

A profound silence followed these words, whose signifi-

cance, cautious though they were, was fully appreciated by Caburus. He sighed heavily.

"So it has come to that," he said quietly.

The old woman's eyes moved uneasily from one man to the other. Then she asked frankly:

"So that means war again?"

It was as though this word had brought order into confusion. Caesar looked up at the speaker with something like sudden fear in his gaze. Now that he had heard the thought which had so often forced itself upon him during the last few fateful months on the lips of another, he became suddenly once more conscious of the destiny which was driving him incessantly onwards, of the whirlwind which, increasing from day to day, was carrying him away with it.

"It must not come to war," he said slowly, deliberating, with a heavy sigh. "*I* do not want war," he added. "All my troops are distributed over Middle Gaul and Northern Gaul: I have only a single legion with me. But"—and his eyes grew darker—"if they compel me—" and he broke off abruptly, pressing his lips together, as though he had already said too much.

"They will not dare," murmured Caburus, almost timidly.

Caesar laughed bitterly.

"Dare?" he repeated. "There is nothing that they will not dare. When Clodius was murdered the penal measures were directed almost exclusively against my adherents, and the new law relating to fraudulent election is full of pinpricks intended for me. The only thing that I can still count on today is Pompeius' irresolution; he shrinks from an open breach, and hitherto he has never dared to refuse me anything that I have demanded with a sufficient insistence."

"He will surely continue to behave in the same fashion," said Caburus, speaking more firmly, and with returning confidence.

But the bitter smile returned to Caesar's lips.

"After the catastrophe of Aduatuca," he said, instead of

directly replying, "Pompeius lent me one of his legions; when Crassus was killed each of us was to have sent a legion against the Parthians; so Pompeius asked me to send not only a legion of my own, but the legion which he had lent me—that is, in reality, two legions: because it would be simpler to do so."

"But was he not justified in doing so?" Caburus objected.

"These two legions," continued Caesar, ignoring the interruption, "are now in Italy, ready to march—in order to be employed as the Senate desires and determines." A pause. Absorbed in his thoughts, Caesar continued: "I can see through the tactics of my enemies perfectly. Today I am still too strong for them: so they are trying, gradually and imperceptibly, to weaken me, to undermine my position; they will refuse to recognize the civic rights which I have given you; the Senate will discharge my veterans directly my command expires; for then, they think, if I am left with empty hands, without an army and without political credit, they can easily dispose of me—if indeed I cannot be induced to commit some capital folly which would of itself deliver me into their hands. Hence these eternal evasions, these delays in negotiating, these half concessions which are made only to be rather more than withdrawn. It is all being done at a snail's pace—and all the more surely for that."

"But is there no justice left in Rome?" cried Caburus angrily. "Can the Senate ignore the people, and the protests of the tribunes—"

"The people! The tribunes! Those that cannot be bribed are silenced by threats. Right is on the side of those who have the power, and the energy to use this power."

"Terrible!" said the old woman quietly.

Caesar looked at her with his bright, keen eyes.

"Terrible, yes. At the same time, it is just as well that it is so; for it gives the man who will not allow himself to be intimidated by the papyrus daggers of hesitating conspirators the possibility of tearing down all that is rotten in the State, of clearing the ground in order to build something better."

THE GREAT GAME

"THE courier from Rome?" Expectantly Caesar looked up at his secretary.

Pollio shook his head, with a curiously embarrassed smile. "Labienus begs for an interview."

"Labienus? Is he there?" Caesar felt a sudden hot stab of dread. "Is there anything amiss again in the legions?"

Once more the curiously embarrassed smile.

"No—he asks if he can see you on a personal matter."

Caesar stared at the secretary. He reflected; then, curtly: "Let him come," he said.

Pollio disappeared, a few moments later Labienus entered the room. His cold, handsome face was drawn and furrowed by an emotion which he sought in vain to control. His greeting was curt, and he ignored the hand which Caesar offered him.

"What is it, Labienus?" he asked, amiably, and not without a certain sympathetic anxiety. "What has happened to you?"

Labienus tried to speak, but the words appeared to choke him. Then, with an effort, he said in a single breath:

"I should like to thank you for the manner in which you have done justice to my achievements in Gaul."

"What?" Caesar did not understand him.

"I should like to thank you," repeated the other, now with unrestrained violence, "for the opinion which your volume—" The sentence threatened to grow involved; he broke off and began afresh: "for the opinion of my achievements with which you have favored me in your volume on the Gallic campaign."

Still Caesar failed to understand him.

"I am glad you are pleased," he said cordially. "Unfortunately lack of time made it impossible to represent your share in the operations as fully—" A malicious laugh interrupted him. He stopped.

"As fully as your own," suggested Labienus malignantly.

Now Caesar understood. His brow, hitherto smooth, was suddenly furrowed.

"I will request you, to begin with," he said emphatically, "to address me in a different tone." He paused, then continued quietly: "You think you have reason for complaint? On what grounds?"

Labienus' fingers fumbled in the folds of his toga and brought out a book, which they tremulously unrolled.

"On what grounds?" hissed the beautiful mouth, now hideously distorted. "On the grounds of everything that is written here! Every word, so far as it relates to me is a lie!"

"Labienus!" cried Caesar, so angrily that the other involuntarily drew back. "I will not tolerate this tone!" He controlled himself, and then added, with emphasis: "You will be afforded an opportunity of explaining your assertions."

"I need no other opportunity than this," retorted Labienus. Once more, with quivering hands, he fingered the book. "Look where I will—I see nothing but lies everywhere!"

Now Caesar at last lost patience:

"Justify your assertions now, then!" And as the other hesitated, he cried, more sharply and fiercely: "Justify them here and now, if I am not to think you a miserable calumniator!"

Labienus had turned extremely pale. Holding the book before him with trembling hands, he ran his eyes quickly over the lines.

"Well?" insisted Caesar angrily.

Labienus gave a convulsive sigh.

"There!" The trembling finger pointed out a passage. "The superior attack on the rearguard of the Helvetii. You describe it as if *you* had carried it out; whereas you were not even there! You were in the territory of the Ambarres! It was I who was responsible for the execution of the whole affair!"

"You are right," said Caesar coldly. "But you overlook the fact that you were under my command, and that I had drawn up the plans. You, as you yourself observe, were responsible merely for its execution."

"So!" It sounded like the hiss of a snake. The hasty fingers

continued to unroll the book, and stopped at another passage. "And the battle of Bibracte, which I really won? My flanking movement which first turned the tide? Was that your planning too? Had you ordered that?

Caesar's brow grew thunderous.

"We discussed that on the evening of the battle. Am I to repeat that your operating with the reserves on your own account placed me in a most critical situation? And that I had need of all my presence of mind in order to adapt myself to it at the last moment? What would have become of the battle, what would have become of us all, if you had had no luck with your division?"

"Luck! Luck! Where and what would you be without your luck?" He ran his eyes further along the roll. "In connection with the fight against Ariovist, where I threw forward the left wing, you make no mention whatever of me; on the other hand, you extol young Crassus, who certainly gave proof of his military capacity at Karrhae."

This aspersion on a dead man was all that was needed to exasperate Caesar completely.

"I never had a great opinion of your character, Titus Labienus," he said, contemptuously. "But I never should have given you credit for such baseness.—Get out of my sight!" he thundered.

But Labienus had not finished. In his clenched fist he held the book out toward Caesar.

"You will correct these errors!" he shrieked.

"Outside!"

"Not before you have pledged yourself—"

"Outside—or—" With bloodshot eyes, like two boxers, the men confronted one another.

The door flew open: Pollio entered.

"The courier from Rome."

"We will discuss this some other time, Labienus. Now I have other things to do. Go now." And to Pollio, as Labienus left the room in silence, he said, having completely recovered his composure:

"Bring the courier here."

But at the sight of the man who entered his self-control threatened again to desert him.

"Curio! You?"

Covered with dust, and dead tired, but apparently in the best of spirits, Curio threw himself into the nearest armchair, without waiting for an invitation.

"I have come from Rome in three days. Can I have a mouthful of wine?"

Pollio hurried out to fetch the wine. Still struggling to regain his composure, Caesar stared at the people's tribune in silence. What was he doing here—this genial rascal, whom he had bought at a great price in order that he might have someone in his pay who would observe and disturb the conspiracies of his enemies in the Senate? Only events of enormous importance could have brought him to Ravenna.

Curio took a long draught from the beaker which Pollio had brought him, leaned back, and looked with a smile at Caesar.

"Are you easily startled, Caesar?"

"Don't talk nonsense!" replied Caesar, irritably.

"If you were, I should have had to give you my news drop by drop. But I think myself that I had better tell you everything at once. Be prepared, then: You have been proclaimed an enemy of the State; the Senate has ordered the mobilization, and Pompeius has been entrusted with the operations against you!"

There was a startled cry: but it did not come from Caesar, who had not even changed color. Quite calmly and casually he replied:

"Yes; I have seen that coming. It is the logical end—" He rose to his feet. "At all events there is an end of haggling and bargaining." Almost eagerly he moved his chair over toward that of the tribune, and sat down again. "Tell me, Curio. Did you lay my letter before them?"

"Your ultimatum with concessions? It was just of that that I was going to speak." He took a second pull at the beaker,

and began: "I took the letter to the Curia on the first of January, and read it aloud. A pity that you were not present at that highly dramatic scene! Your words made the profoundest impression on all, and the majority would certainly have decided in your favor had they not been absolutely terrorized by the Ultras. But first of all the Consuls rose—and especially Marcellus—and forbade any debate on your proposals; then Quintus Scipio declared, as Pompeius' mouthpiece, that now was the moment for action, and he proposed to profit by it. He was joined by the second Consul, Lentulus, who openly declared that resolutions of the Senate were not binding on him; that even without them he and his friends would take action. Thus intimidated, the majority passed a resolution to the effect that you have to surrender Gaul within four weeks to a senatorial commission under the presidency of Domitius Ahenobarbus; and that in the event of opposition you will be regarded as guilty of high treason. Antonius and I opposed our veto; for which reason a few of Pompeius' hotheads attempted to close in on us, while the Senate declared our proceedings to be revolutionary, passed the resolution 'Videant consules,' and chose Pompeius as the general of the forces to be employed against you. We had to escape from Rome in disguise—and now here I am. Antonius, who had the worse horse, must be here within the next hour.—That is all." He looked at Caesar expectantly: "What will you do now?"

Caesar rose to his feet, quietly and without haste.

"You will soon see what I am going to do. How many legions has Pompeius at his disposal?"

"In Italy, only the two which you gave up to him. But the mobilization is in full swing."

"That does not count.—Pollio!" He spoke in his old commanding tone, and it pulled the secretary together as in the days when he had been Caesar's adjutant.

"Imperator?"

"Have the alarm sounded in the Thirteenth. They are to stand to arms: I shall be with them in half an hour. Express

despatches to Fabius and Trebonius; they are to bring their eight legions here forthwith. Send Labienus to me."

Pollio, who was hastily making notes, hesitated.

"Imperator—"

"Well?"

"You will wait for Labienus in vain. I heard outside just now that he had ridden off in the direction of Rome."

Caesar heard him quietly, and quietly he said:

"The first deserter. And I hope the last." He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, then I must make other arrangements. But go, Pollio." Pollio ran out; Caesar watched him go, and turned to Curio: "Antonius, you say, is on the way here?"

"He ought to arrive any moment."

"And you? How about? Do you want to take part in the war?"

"As—what?"

"As commandant of troops, of course. I have one legion; I am dividing it into three columns, which will march on Rome by all three routes simultaneously."

Curio gazed at him, doubting, suspecting, comprehending.

"Right into the midst of the mobilization?"

"Yes. I am leading one column myself; Antonius will command the second; and you the third, if you will."

Curio sprang to his feet.

"If I will!" he cried, with enthusiasm. "I am glad I had confidence in you! The others were fools to venture to dice with you!"

"Yes," said Caesar, harshly. "Now I make my throw."

READY!

Caesar saw clearly enough how Marcus Antonius winked his left eye at Curio as the latter came into the room; he even understood the meaning of this grimace; but he no longer felt disposed to maintain the mask of composure and outward moderation which he had worn so long. A storm was raging within him, and he had no intention of suppressing it.

Curio too had apparently seen and understood the wink;

but he did not yet know his Caesar, and consequently he did not follow the sensible example of Antonius (who kept perfectly quiet, and as far as possible avoided the exasperated tiger), but went up to him with a cheerful and careless greeting.

An unintelligible growl from Caesar, who was irritably poring over documents and maps, was all the response he got, and it would have warned a more cautious man; none the less, Curio thought fit to begin one of his cheery conversations:

"Well, how do you like it in Rome, Caesar? How long is it since you have been here? Nine or ten years, isn't it? Do you find the city much altered?" The angry eyes of the man who had tamed Gaul stared at him; but Curio was not to be put off by their silent menace, and continued, in his easy, gossiping tone: "You have done splendidly: to attack with one legion, to lose hardly a man, and to end the war in barely six weeks—I call that an achievement!"

The mouth compressed between the quivering jaws began to work, and slowly the lips were thrust forward. A hoarse, creaking voice demanded:

"What war are you talking about?"

"The war against Pompeius, of course; you have no other on hand."

"And you think that is ended?"

"What else? You are the undisputed master of Italy and Rome—Pompeius has escaped to Greece with the extremists—"

A bundle of documents crashed down on the table, and a great cloud of dust whirled upwards.

"You have no more brains than the rest of them!" cried Caesar. "The war ended? The war is just beginning!"

Curio stared at him with startled eyes.

"Yes—but—" he stammered.

"The war is just beginning," repeated Caesar, as angrily as before, "and the Senate has every reason to congratulate itself; for now they have me in the vise, and can squeeze me

as hard as they like. Have I any troops? Yes, somewhere up there in Gaul! Have I any ships? Not a single keel! Have I any money? The State treasury, which I had to take for myself, like a burglar, was exhausted long ago, used to stop the mouths of the grumbling rabble! And you call me the master of Italy, when the Senate has only to speak a single word in order to bring seven legions from Spain, two from Greece, and three under Crassus and Scipio from Syria and Cilicia, and to hurl them against me! One simply can't work with such fellows! You are blind, blind!"

Caesar's outbreak had deprived Curio of the power of speech. Fortunately no one expected him to speak. Caesar had leapt to his feet, and was now striding about the room.

"That would have suited you, doubtless!" he cried: "To make a second Catilina of me! That was how you imagined it, eh? We should march into Rome, plunder the city, burn all the ledgers, and live riotously—until it pleased the Senate to lock us up and wring our necks. But I tell you this"—and he suddenly stood still, and fixed his hearers with his smouldering flashing eyes—"there is going to be nothing of the sort! The man who so much as touches private property shall hang! I have not undertaken this fight in order to replace one terror by another!"

He resumed his wandering to and fro. His mind was leaping from point to point.

"Pompeius was a fool, a fool, a fool," he muttered violently, between his teeth. "If he had only consented to a single conference . . . all might still have been well. But no—and there you have his accursed vanity—the imperial commander cannot negotiate with a mere Proconsul, a rebel! Well, worse things than that will happen to him! They will squeeze him dry like a lemon, and then throw him aside! I know the noble gentlemen!"

Once more he suddenly halted.

"But I will soon have done with them!" he cried. "I will break their backs, one by one, and organize the empire as I please!" He stopped, in the midst of an angry gesture, as

though struck motionless; his lifted arm fell like a broken bough; and he asked, in a voice that had suddenly grown dull and lifeless: "You come from the Consul?"

"Yes," Curio stammered, disconcerted by the abrupt change of subject: "From Lentulus."

"What does he say?" insisted Caesar. "Is he ready to declare me Dictator?"

Curio shook his head.

"No—he declared that no power in the world could induce him—"

"Did you tell him that I would pay all his debts?"

"Yes. His reply was, that he was not selling the Republic."

Caesar stood motionless and silent, as though still listening. Then he slowly shrugged his shoulders. He was now once more—outwardly, at least—perfectly composed.

"Then there is nothing to be done," he said, contemptuously. "Perhaps it is better so. All the men who count—Cato, Marcellus, Scipio—have gone to Greece with Pompeius . . . and moreover, it would be impossible to govern with the remnant of the Senate." He stretched himself, and drew a deep breath. "At all events, no one can persuade me to try." He resumed his interrupted wandering, his hands clasped behind his back. His mind was working restlessly. The others watched in silence.

"We will begin operations at once," he said at last. "Tomorrow I start for Spain. Pollio, you will send word to the commandants in Gaul to the effect that they must wait for my arrival in Narbo." He went to the table, picked up one of the lists which were lying there, and wrote a few brief notes on the margin. "The three veteran legions which I have here must be ready to march at once: they will go with me tomorrow." He looked up; his eager gaze, no longer gloomy, swept the room as though seeking for something. "What else is it I need?"

"Ships," suggested Curio, almost timidly.

"Ships," repeated Caesar, absently. He accepted the suggestion, and repeated: "Ships.—Antonius and Lepidus remain

in Rome. You, Lepidus, will see to it that all is quiet in Rome; you, Antonius, will guard Italy. In the ports, above all in Tarentum and Brundisium, transports and warships must be built; as many as the shipyards can turn out. Curio, you will take the four recruit legions, occupy Sicily, and then proceed to Africa, in order to protect my right flank. Dolabella, you will march with the legions to Illyria and keep an eye on Pompeius." He threw back his head and covered his eyes with his hand. "I think that is all," he said, slowly. "Or is there anything else?"

"Money," whispered Curio faintly.

"Money!" Caesar agreed. "Pollio, my son, go to the banker Atticus, and tell him to get a few of his colleagues together; I will follow you directly." The young man, accustomed to mute obedience, bowed his head and silently disappeared. Antonius ventured a faint smile; the idea of levying contributions on Cicero's best friend and man of business amused him enormously. Even Caesar—he had grown more cheerful with every word he spoke—smiled a winning, piratical smile. "I think they will lend me their money if I make it perfectly clear to them that their compliance is my price for the safety of their coffers." For a moment he enjoyed the comprehending twinkle in the eyes of his followers; then he became serious again. "But I think that is really all," he said, tallying the items on his fingers: "Troops, ships, money. And then we must make haste to beat them: first the army without generals, and then the generals without an army."

Curio, embarrassed, cleared his throat, and objected:

"Generals without an army? But you yourself told us that Pompeius has troops with him."

A spacious gesture of the hand: "Two legions," retorted Caesar, disdainfully. "And for Pompeius they are unreliable, for they have served under me."

"And the three with Cassius and Scipio?"

Again that wave of the hand.

"Until they can get out of Asia. . ."

TWO WOMEN

THIS time Caesar was not ushered into the garden; the north wind was streaming through the leafless trees and driving folk indoors, where they sat shivering and discontented, though wrapped in their warmest garments, round the fuming charcoal braziers.

He was ushered in with all the ceremonial due to a great lord: he passed through a double row of lackeys to the door of the small, comfortable room where the lady of the house awaited him, to bid him welcome with studied courtesy; yet Caesar remembered, with a vague, dull regret, the days long ago when he was accustomed to enter that very room unannounced; when the warm light that was kindled in a woman's eyes was a better welcome than all the solemn pomp with which he was received today.

Now at last they were sitting face to face, politely conversing. He had inquired as to her health, and had amiably expressed his pleasure at seeing her look so well; she had congratulated him on his brilliant success in Gaul, and asked a few questions as to the country and the people, which, as he clearly recognized, were asked as a matter of mere politeness, and betrayed a complete lack of interest. While he answered her, mechanically, he covertly examined her. She had aged, but she still retained traces of her former beauty—and, above all, the charm of the accomplished great lady, the charm which had once so delighted him. But the eyes, the great unfathomable eyes were no longer warm and soft as of old; they had the hard, cold brilliance which he had seen for the first time when he told her of his approaching marriage to Calpurnia.

But he had not come for the sake of pointless conversation. During his years in Gaul he had been conscious of the gradual spinning of a web which, with this house and Cato's as it centres, had at last involved the whole Senate, and in which Pompeius, the politically helpless Pompeius, was finally ensnared. And now he meant, if he could, to uncover

this web, to learn how he stood with Servilia, and what he had to expect from her.

He profited by the first pause in their conversation to ask, with assumed carelessness: "Is Marcus Brutus well?"

"Oh, I believe he is quite well," replied Servilia as casually.

"I am sorry I shall not see him."

"Yes, it is a pity; he is not in Rome."

"I know," said Caesar, with equanimity. "He is with Pompeius," he added.

He noted a faint blush of embarrassment.

"Yes—" Servilia was evidently seeking for some extenuating phrase. "It all happened so quickly—he had really no time to make up his mind—"

"I know," repeated Caesar, with a smile that was almost cheerful. "The war party seem to have applied quite unprecedented methods of terrorism." He roused himself from his comfortable position, and leaning forward: "Isn't it rather deplorable," he continued, "that it should have to come to this?"

"What do you mean?" she asked, in confusion.

"All this," he replied, with a vague wave of the hand. "I assuredly had no hostile intentions. But do what I would, all my efforts to preserve peace were crossed and thwarted by an invisible power."

A quick, searching, sidelong glance.

"You have your suspicions?"

"None; I have certain knowledge." He saw her involuntary pallor; he instinctively guessed at her weak point; and therefore he attacked with the desperate resolution of a gambler: "Personal enemies—not all of one sex—to whom wounded vanity means more than the common welfare—(he was about to rise to his feet, but remembered that he was no longer at home in this house, and stopped in the act of rising, so that his attitude was like that of a panther preparing to spring). "Is not that pitiful?"

She could not meet his eyes.

"You must name these people," she murmured.

"Why name them? Have I not said enough?" He fixed his eyes upon her.

She opened hers wide and looked him full in the face. He was startled by the unconcealed hatred which they flashed upon him. Now he was indeed certain—and now he intended to profit by his knowledge.

"Nevertheless, I should like to hear the names of these people," she persisted.

"Of the men or of the women?"

"Of both."

He leaned back again.

"Cato," he said. "Bibulus."

"Go on!" she said, excitedly. "The women!"

"Cato's handsome daughter Porcia." The words trembled on his lips; but the tremor was deliberate.

"Porcia?" She heard the name with uncomprehending amazement.

Caesar breathed deeply: she had expected another name.

"Porcia," he repeated slowly. "She was, of course, only a means to an end; only the bait at which the man to be incited against me was to bite."

"Porcia is married," exclaimed Servilia.

"Did *you* find that an obstacle?" he asked, with brutal directness. "She is married—all the worse for Brutus," he added mercilessly.

"What do you mean by that?" she stammered, breathlessly.

Now he rose to his feet. Tall and erect as a lance his figure looked in the deepening twilight.

"I mean by that," he replied quietly, "that Brutus and myself have been the victims of a scandalous intrigue; that Cato, Bibulus and the fair Porcia have been used to set Brutus against me; with such success that he has won his spurs not under me but against me, and that the son has taken up arms against the father." He leaned forward, and the cowering woman felt his gaze cover her like a cloak of shame. "Shall I tell you who so used them? Shall I tell you the last name of all?"

She struck up at him like a snake. Her hatred had singled out the one word that was his secret wound.

"Your son!" she exclaimed, scornfully, her lips quivering with rage. "Does he know, then, that he is your son?"

He gazed at her with something like horror.

"Doesn't he know his father?"

"No!" The word was like a blow; what followed came with a rush: "I could hardly be expected to tell him that he was a bastard!"

Caesar felt the blood recede to his heart. His hands and feet became suddenly cold as ice. The trembling fingers of his right hand grasped the arm of the chair by which he was standing.

Then the blood flowed back into his veins. He had himself in hand again. With a stony face he gazed into the face before him. It was the mask of a fury.

And then, as he gazed into this once beloved face, all anger and pain and discord fell from him, leaving only a faint melancholy; and even this was wholly superficial. It was as though he stood before an old, long forgotten grave.

"If you really regarded him as a bastard," he cried, in a hushed voice, as though he were speaking in a death-chamber, "Then, of course, you could not tell him.—Farewell, Servilia."

He bowed his head, turned upon his heels, and with slow and measured tread left the room, and the house . . .

* * * * *

"What is it?" Caesar started, and gazed at the servant who was carrying the lamp with eyes that had to find their way back to reality. It was dark outside. "Yes, yes," he said, sighing; and he added, hastily: "I can see no one. No one."

The servant hesitated.

"What is it now?"

"The mistress asked—if you had time—"

"Well?"

"Dinner is waiting."

Caesar was about to send the man away; an excuse was on

the tip of his tongue, but he did not utter it. Slowly he rose and followed the lamp-bearer.

In the dining-room Calpurnia was waiting for him. On her too eight years had left their traces; but while they had withered Servilia's mature beauty, they had ripened Calpurnia's flower-like, virginal charm.

She was wonderful as she stood there awaiting her husband, the hair of her stately, high-bred little head carefully curled, her body sheathed in a light, close-fitting gown, while her throat and arms were clasped by the Julian family jewels.

Caesar greeted her with reserved courtesy, almost as a stranger might have done; but the lovely picture did not leave his heart unstirred.

He went to the table, which, in accordance with the ancient custom, was surrounded not by couches but by chairs; and suddenly stopped short in surprise. Round his cover lay a wreath of laurel and of roses. And as he looked up he saw a tender smile on Calpurnia's face.

Involuntarily he returned the smile, and pointed to the decoration.

"Why this?" he asked.

"Because you have to go away again tomorrow," she replied.

"Of course," he said. "Yes." He waited until she had seated herself, and then followed her example. The servants brought in the first course: shellfish.

Absorbed in his thoughts, he ate without noticing that the meal consisted of his favorite dishes. He asked for a beaker of Chian wine, diluted and sweetened with honey, and leaned back in his chair. The servants had left the room: the lamps, whose flames were shaded by translucent plates of horn, cast a soft and equable light over the table.

It was not comfort that he felt—to that he had long been a stranger—but something like peace and relaxation. It was long indeed since he had known such a feeling.

Calpurnia gazed at him, as silent as himself. With her elbows propped on the table, and her hands folded, she rested

her chin on her clasped fingers. So sitting, she gazed at him across the table, following every movement of his relaxing features.

"Caius!" she said softly, at last.

"Yes!" he replied, absently.

"How are you feeling, Caius?"

He looked at her in some surprise.

"Very comfortable," he replied. "Thank you; very comfortable."

She smiled a little and nodded contentedly.

"I am glad."

Her smile penetrated his pleasant lethargy. He became suddenly attentive.

"Why do you ask me?" he inquired.

"Because I want you to feel really comfortable here."

Now he too smiled for a moment.

"I do feel really comfortable here, thank you!" he replied.

"Truly?"

"Truly."

She unclasped her hands, and slid one of them across the table. He laid his own hand upon it, and gently stroked the slender fingers.

"So you are contented?" she continued. "Have I ordered your household as I should?"

"It could not be ordered better," he assured her with conviction.

"Caesar's wife has obligations. I have always remembered that."

He raised the slender hand to his lips.

"Yes, child, I can see that." He was silent for a moment, then he added: "You have done your duty perfectly."

She laughed, and Caesar could not but remark how fresh and youthful was her laugher.

"Now you flatter me," she said. And then, suddenly she was very serious, and she gazed at him with wide, earnest eyes. "Do you remember our first coming here?"

He nodded.

"I behaved very foolishly then, did I not?"

She waited for an answer, but none came. She continued:

"I have wanted very much to speak of that. Will you listen?"

"Gladly."

She withdrew her hand, and began to play with a few crumbs of bread, from which her eyes never lifted.

"I do not know where I should begin," she said slowly. "You were for me . . . ever since I can remember . . . something like a being of a higher species . . . of whom one does not really quite believe that he is real, and actually exists . . . and eats and drinks . . . and lives like other men. When there was talk of you at home—and my father often spoke of you—one felt that one was hearing of some mythical being . . . like Romulus or Numa. 'Caesar has done this,' 'Caesar has done that,' 'Caesar has got the better of the Senate,' 'Caesar has restored the right of appeal.' All the rest were nobodies, merely a great mob, from which, perhaps, a face emerged here and there; but you alone rose above them all, the one above the many." Her head drooped yet further, as she continued her explanation. "Then came the day when you wanted me for your wife. My father asked me: 'Will you?' and I said 'Yes!' What else could I have said? It did not even occur to me that one could oppose one's will to yours. It was Caesar's command, and therefore it must be. But even then I could not persuade myself that it was all real. It was as though I was dreaming a strange dream, and I thought every moment that I should wake. I felt like the bride of a god—like Io—like Danaë. It would not have surprised me if the wall of my room had suddenly opened, and you had poured into it as a cloud, as a shower of golden rain." Once more she fell silent, but presently continued: "Then came the wedding-day. First the ceremony, which made me feel so solemn, and then the banquet—do you remember? Where you are sitting now Pompeius sat, with Julia beside him; then they all went—and we were alone. I still

found it impossible to believe in the reality of what was happening to me. I repeated old nursery rhymes to myself, in order to convince myself that I was awake; I felt about me —and it seemed as though there was a wall in front of me; and I felt, too, an unfamiliar, inexplicable fear, that increased from moment to moment. I have often thought of those minutes—I have had long years in which to do so—and I can still remember every word of yours, every movement. How at first you held me so tenderly, and drew me down on to the chair beside you. Your dear words comforted me so—they soothed me like a lullaby—I could have listened to you for ever. And then, suddenly, I was terrified. I don't know just when it was, but I suddenly saw your eyes; they were like black flames, and they burned deep into my soul. And then I found myself wide awake, and understood that it was all real; that the god whom I still seemed to feel beside me was a man, who desired me, from whose warm body a scorching breath swept over me, wrapping me round and almost burning me. I wanted to jump up, to run away, and I could not; I was little more than a thing, a thing without a will, with which you could do and of which you could dispose as you pleased. But at the same time it was as though I were sitting naked before you, stripped like a slave sold in the market. Shame, pride, terror—I don't know what I felt. I felt only that I must strike at your hands as they sought to grasp me, that I must flee from the hot breath that beat upon me, that I must hide myself from the black, scorching fire in your eyes. And then—it was then that it happened!" Her voice was so low that her words were almost inaudible. "I summoned up all my strength, and I sprang to my feet, and in my senseless terror I spoke that one word: 'No!' " She hesitated, gazing before her. In a curiously dry tone she concluded: "Then suddenly all was still. You looked at me—and I knew everything. It was so cold of a sudden in the room—and you stood up—and said something—and you went. I was alone—and I knew that I had lost you."

There was a profound silence. Then she spoke again: "I

have paid dearly for that girlish folly, Caius; I have suffered bitterly: for eight endless years. They have taught me to realize all that I destroyed with that one word: I ought to have been your helpmate, your friend, and perhaps"—and again her voice was almost inaudible—"perhaps I might have meant . . . a little happiness. I have missed all that. You longed for a son—I have not given you one." She bowed her head. Then she raised it: her cheeks were crimson, but her eyes were bright and steady. "For eight years I have repented, Caius," she said, in a clear voice. "But the gods do not ask me to atone forever. And so, I tell myself, the day may yet come when this ordeal will be at an end, when you will know that I understand you better now, when you will come to me again, as you came then—" she was speaking more and more faintly—"and take me in your arms as you did then, and ask me again, as you asked me then, for the son who—"

She stopped. With an abrupt and violent movement Caesar had risen to his feet, and now stood, deathly pale, with his trembling hands pressed against his breast. His lips quivered; his eyes, full of an inexplicable terror, stared into the unknown.

"No—no—" he panted, in a dreadful whisper: "no son . . . no son!"

THE CONQUERED WEST

Trebonius had finished his report, and now stood waiting, weary and longing for sleep, fingering his swordhilt with nervous, twitching fingers.

Caesar looked him slowly up and down. He saw that the man was at the end of his endurance; was in urgent need of rest and absolute relaxation. With some little compunction he noted his sunken eyes, his fallen cheeks, his constantly twitching lips.

But he could not spare him; the possession of Massilia was too important to be risked because a human being was at breaking-point. The city must be taken—must, at whatever cost, even though all Pompeius' forces were behind its walls.

"You will go back today," he said, slowly deliberating. "The sea blockade is to be increased until it is absolutely impenetrable; the destroyed siege-works must be restored as promptly as possible. After this breach of the armistice you will refuse to parley any further with the Massiliots. The moment you are ready to storm the city you will attack."

His energy conveyed itself to his lieutenant. Trebonius nodded repeatedly.

"And supposing," he began, "supposing we succeed—"

"What do you mean? In taking the city?"

Trebonius nodded again, and an evil light flickered in his eyes.

"Yes," he said. He drew himself up stiffly, and gritted his teeth. "Then I will make an end of it, once and for all," he said, in deep, guttural tones, like those of a drunken man. "No mercy will be shown; not a stone will be left upon another. My men are in a bitter mood. In a month I hope to be able to report that Massilia is taken."

"What are you thinking of!" Caesar exclaimed, in horror. "Once the opposition is broken you will not touch so much as a hair of the inhabitants' heads!"

Trebonius stared at him open-mouthed and uncomprehending.

"But in view of this unheard-of treachery—"

"Not a hair, I tell you!" repeated Caesar, with emphasis. "Am I a butcher?" He checked himself, and continued more calmly: "All of you misunderstand me. Do you imagine that I am looking for military glory? Have I nothing better in view than the erection of a triumphal column in the market-place, with as many names as possible of battles won, cities taken and destroyed, and peoples enslaved? Have I taken up the sword for the sake of the sword?" He shook his head. "I am a man with one idea, and this idea I have tried to realize: that is all. Massilia has behaved abominably to us; has broken treaties and has betrayed us to our enemies; that is true. But Massilia is a great and splendid city, the western outpost of the Greek world, a foundation-stone of a civiliza-

tion, without which the whole fabric would collapse. What do I care for the individual fates of its inhabitants? They have been born and they must die; that is our human lot. But Massilia the *idea*, the idea of a civilized centre of enduring value—that must not be touched! That must live on, like every truly great idea, if humanity is not to perish." He looked into the angry, reluctant face, the twitching, working mouth, and concluded, drily, with latent contempt: "I knew that you would not understand me. That is of no importance. After all, I am used to that. Go and do as I have told you. Go, Trebonius." A kindly impulse moved him to mitigate his harsh words, to conciliate the offended man. "Go, my friend," he said, "and take good care of one of my best men!"

The general bowed quickly and left the room without a word. Caesar watched him as he went.

"Swords," he murmured. "Mere swords, and not a single brain!" He sighed, and touched the suspended gong. Hirtius entered.

"Is there anyone else out there?"

Hirtius' face was comically distorted by a sly, boyish grimace.

"Yes—Varro."

"Varro—of course!" said Caesar, with a quiet laugh. "He announced that he was coming today. How does he look? Does he give you the impression of being greatly depressed?"

"No," replied Hirtius, staring at Caesar in astonishment. "He looks rather pleased with himself—thoroughly pleased."

"And that surprises you?"

"Naturally! A defeated commander, who comes with an offer of capitulation—"

Caesar's lips twitched.

"Since when has Varro been a commander?"

"Imperator?"

"Is every man a commander who commands an army? Varro—very much against his secret will—was told to make war upon me, and is heartily thankful that the responsibility is off his shoulders." His mouth closed sharply; bitterly he

compressed his lips. "It should have occurred to him sooner," he said, gloomily. "Then Spain would already lie behind us, and we should be facing Pompeius in Illyria. Now he has had time to collect troops, and the war that I had hoped to end here must continue." Impatiently he shook the arms of his chair. "Ah, if I had ships! Ships, ships!" His gaze slipped into the unknown, returned, and met the startled eyes of his adjutant. He smiled, a kindly, winning smile. "Well—we shall get over somehow. It is all better really; otherwise Trebonius would commit some folly in Massilia." He laid his hand on Hirtius' shoulder and pushed him gently to the door. "Now go, and send Varro to me."

Hirtius hurried out, ushered Varro into the room, and discreetly disappeared.

Caesar's expression was one of bright, sunny cheerfulness. He gazed into Varro's fat face, noted his look of embarrassment, waited, saw that the other could find no words with which to begin, and at last spoke for him:

"Well, Varro, do you come as friend or foe?"

And since Varro could still find no answer, he went up to him and took him by the hand.

"Varro!"

Varro blinked. His lips twitched, and were about to smile; but he remembered in time that a smile would not be in place at the moment. Very, very quietly he spoke, and it seemed as though in this one word all had been said:

"Caesar!"

They gazed deeply into one another's eyes. Varro's breathing was quick and shallow—and suddenly he burst into laughter; laughter that sounded at first nervous and convulsive, but quickly relaxed into a loud, frank roar of merriment, accompanied by Caesar's clear, hearty laugh.

Now that they had skated over the thin ice all was easy. "How did you ever come to take it into your head," asked Caesar, once they were comfortably seated, "to make war against me?"

"I?" Varro eagerly repudiated the idea. "I never did take

it into my head! If I had had my way I should still be sitting over my books in the Alban hills. But was I ever asked? There was the Senate, and there was Pompeius, and it was all settled: Domitius takes the western fleet and goes to Massilia, Bibulus takes the eastern fleet and accompanies Pompeius to Illyria, Afranius and Petreius take five legions and march them off to the Pyrenees, Varro takes two legions and proceeds to Gades—and there I was!"

"And then you had to fight me."

"Yes. And had the worst of luck. Pompeius, of course, is everything in Spain, but they haven't forgotten you and what you did for them. Some were willing and obedient, but the rest pulled faces, and their corn had to be extorted from them bushel by bushel." He snorted angrily. "If only I had been really a commandant! But I was more like a storekeeper and steward and accountant, and so on—I, a scholar!—so that it never came to real soldiering." He stopped, and looked at Caesar rather helplessly. "But all that wouldn't have mattered if we hadn't received such alarming information. We heard, in rapid succession: Caesar is in Corfinium. Caesar is in Brundisium. Caesar is in Rome. Caesar is before Massilia. Caesar is up against Ilerda Afranius and Petreius. Those were days! You ought to have heard our council of war! Some, the robustious fellows, thought it was a scandal to sit there doing nothing: we ought to go to the help of our comrades; others, who had only half their hearts in the business, thought it only showed once more what an unfortunate affair the whole war was, and that we at all events had best keep out of it. And so it went; now one party was uppermost now the other, accordingly as you or Afranius had the best of it!"

"Until at last Ilerda capitulated—and then all was over. All the genuine Pompeians went off at once, and left me in the lurch. I hadn't the least idea what to do. In any case, I thought, a parade of the troops won't do any harm. I would take the opportunity, I told myself, of talking to the soldiers; perhaps some reasonable course would occur to me." He stopped, and looked at Caesar, whose face was quivering with

suppressed laughter. "That parade was the stupidest thing I could have hit on. Do you know what happened?"

"I know," nodded Caesar.

"The case must be unique in the history of the world. And of course it had to happen to me, unlucky fellow that I am! They stood to attention, and I went up into the tribune and was just going to address them, when suddenly one of the legions—the Vernacula—made a right-about turn and marched off without a word! The scandal of it! The scandal! I must have gone as red as a beetroot. I said not a word more, and got down from the tribune." His perplexed eyes sought Caesar's face. "Well—that was the end. I did the most sensible thing I could: I went home and wrote you a letter in which I told you that I should offer no further resistance and awaited your instructions. And here I am."

Caesar nodded—a benevolently smiling god.

"And it is well that you are here, believe me, Varro.—My instructions? They are very simple: the men of the Vernacula have already sworn in, and as for those of the other legion—any who choose to come to me will be welcome, and the rest must lay down their arms and return to Italy.

"And I? What is happening to me? I am your prisoner."

"You?" Again Caesar smiled. "Well, as for you, I expressly command you"—he spoke with simulated severity—"to repair to your villa in the Alban hills, and proceed with your studies of Heracleides and Menippus, whom you will certainly find more interesting than Pompeius and myself.—Farewell, Varro!" He stood up, clapped the abashed and delighted scholar on the shoulder as he rose from his chair, and pointed smiling to the door.

Varro had almost reached it when a word from Caesar checked him. He turned, and looked inquiringly at the speaker.

"What do you think?" asked Caesar, comfortably. "Who will be the final victor: Pompeius or myself?"

"You, of course," replied Varro, with conviction. "But what has it to do with me?"

"The teaching of grammar in the Roman schools," said Caesar gravely, "is in a very bad way. You shall reform it."

CAESAR'S LUCK!

"STILL no report?" His gaze fell on Hirtius, who shook his head, and passed on to Pollio, who repeated the silent gesture. Caesar nervously pushed back his stool and stood up.

"I do not understand Antonius," he exclaimed. "I ordered him to follow as quickly as possible! I cannot remain for ever with my fifteen thousand men before Dyrrhachium! They are too few to do anything with, and too many to feed." The last words led to a further question: "What about the commissariat? Is there still enough grain?"

"No," replied Hirtius. "But the men are baking themselves bread of the bark of trees, and swear they will hold out even if they have to eat grass!"

"My brave boys!" said Caesar, with emotion. "If only I could help them! But the sea blockade is still too close. My old friend Bibulus knows that he has me in a trap here, and is already looking forward to the moment when hunger will do what his military capacities would never succeed in doing." The decisive tone faded from his voice, and again it was nervous and hesitating. "But there must be food left somewhere! Have you searched the countryside thoroughly?"

Hirtius helplessly shrugged his shoulders.

"There is nothing left. Buthrotum and Oricum were the last places where we found anything."

"So I must sit here, doing nothing, and wait until that eternal waverer chooses to tighten his fingers round my throat?—No, no, I cannot stand it! Hirtius!"

"Imperator?" Caesar's decisive tone aroused fresh hope in the young man.

"Are there despatch-boats in the harbor?"

"Yes. Are you ordering them out? There is a storm brewing."

"No matter! Let the swiftest make ready to sail. Now at once!"

Hirtius knew that tone; this was a command which must not be questioned. Quickly and briefly he asked:

"When am I to start? Where am I to go?"

"You?" Caesar looked at him in surprise, then nodded emphatically: "Yes, after all, you shall go too. And Pollio as well. But no one else, you understand? I do not wish anyone else to hear of it."

The faces of the two adjutants betrayed their bewildered astonishment.

"Hear of what, Imperator?"

"That I am crossing to Italy," replied Caesar, in a tone as matter-of-fact as though he were going for a short stroll.

"You?"

"Who else? I must at last knew clearly how matters stand; this is choking me." He looked into the adjutants' startled faces, and continued:

"'The matter is much simpler than it looks: in stormy weather the blockade will not be so strictly kept as at other times; we shall disguise ourselves—and if we have luck we shall be in Brundisium early tomorrow morning."

"And the army here?"

"In two or three days we shall be back! Nothing definite will happen in that time."

"But that you yourself should take this risk—"

A wave of the hand interrupted the speaker.

"Man!" cried Caesar, his face drawn with misery, "Don't you see that I shall die if I have to stay here?—Go, go, and come back to tell me that all is ready."

* * * * *

The despatch-boat, a long, shallow craft which would hold about five men, was pitching heavily on the wildly dancing waves of the estuary. Half frightened, half querulous, the master and one of the crew were holding it fast to the bank. The sail was lowered; but by the mast a bight of sailcloth that had not been made fast fluttered in the whistling wind.

The dim glimmer of a lantern became visible; three figures,

wrapped in coarse woollen mantles, came down the hilly path and joined the waiting sailors. A silent nod, and they stepped into the boat. One of them turned to the master:

"You know your orders?"

"Yes," the man growled. "But it can't be done."

"It must be done," said the sharp voice of the second man.

The master pricked up his ears; somewhere he had heard that voice before.

"On your responsibility," he growled. "If we are all drowned together . . . it won't be my fault."

"Don't talk, and get off!" ordered the first speaker. Without further words, the master cast off. The boat was at once carried away downstream by the dancing waves.

"Make sail!" ordered the sharp voice, a voice that brooked no contradiction.

"In this wind?" murmured the master, hesitating.

"Make sail!"

Twitching fingers cast loose the lashings of the mainsail, and the wind hurled itself into the loosened canvas. The boat heeled over and shot forward like an arrow.

"We shall capsize," said the master, with quivering lips. No one answered. Mysterious as gods of the nether world, the three muffled figures sat motionless on the thwarts.

The gale was momently increasing. The foaming waves came slapping over the gunwales, and the water gathered in dimly sparkling pools on the floodboards. A squally gust suddenly struck the vessel broadside on and threw it on its beam-ends; the water came surging inboard. The sailors screamed:

"We are sinking!"

Suddenly the cloak flew aside from the face of one of the three passengers; eyes like smouldering embers stared at the terrified men. A terrible voice, no longer human shouted above the storm:

"Never fear! You are carrying Caesar and his luck!"

But at the river mouth the storm grew to a hurricane. A squall leapt upon the boat, tore the sail to shreds in a moment, and whirled the fragments out of sight. The bow and

the stern dipped alternately deep into the waves; seas fell crashing over the gunwale, and the boat began to fill. Again and again, obeying the peremptory will of the Imperator, the master tried to make way against the storm, but again and again the boat was beaten back. Despite the icy gale, despite the driving downpour of sleet, the men were bathed in sweat as they struggled to outwit the storm and bring the boat out into the open sea.

But all was in vain. After an hour and a half of uninterrupted effort their strength was exhausted, and the boat had not moved. The eyes of his companions turned to Caesar, who sat huddled on the thwart, biting his knuckles.

At last he started up, threw back his head in desperate defiance, and pointed: Back. With quick resolution the master took advantage of an approaching roller, threw over the tiller, and let the boat drive inland on the tide.

To row upstream was a superhuman labor. But to the master it was child's play; the wild sea seemed almost like a duckpond; his precious life was no longer in danger! Only the sight of the motionless figure on the middle thwart caused him a certain discomfort.

It was already growing light when they landed at the place which they had left after midnight. The keel of the boat grated on the sand. The master and his men jumped out into the shallow water and hauled the boat up on the shore. Caesar stood up with the stiff, jerky movements of a marionette, lifted his foot over the gunwale and set it heavily on the sand: he was landing not like a conqueror, but like a man defeated.

* * * * *

The faithful, beseeching eyes of the soldiers' delegates caused him almost physical pain. With barely concealed impatience he listened to their awkwardly worded request that he would never again take such a risk, never again stake his precious life.

What could he answer? That urgent necessity had driven him forth despite wind and wave? That this venture had been

a last attempt to bring them salvation? That wind and wave were less formidable enemies than Pompeius on land and Bibulus on the sea? That the iron trap in which they were caught offered them not the faintest possibility of escape—that he would soon have to tell them (not today, not tomorrow, but on a day not very distant): All is over: there is nothing left us but to die as free men!

They would not understand him—or would not believe him: could there be anything that was stronger than their Imperator? That could say No when he said Yes? They would laugh, and shake their heads, and dream of the laurels of fame which would presently clasp their brows, which to his fearful, prophetic gaze were already bright with blood.

His impassive gaze passed over their heads; his lifted hand was about to wave them a silent dismissal. Caesar had had luck, and Caesar had outlived his luck. All men are mortal; Caius is a man; Caius is mortal. The syllogism ran through his head, though he felt nothing of its truth.

And then there was a sound of voices outside the barracks. Indifferently and yet curiously startled he turned to the door.

"Caesar! Caesar!"

Pollio rushed in, laughing and crying, staggered against a centurion, pushed him away, stood before Caesar trembling in every limb, and shouted—shouted at the top of his voice—and yet it was hard to understand him:

"The blockade is over—Bibulus is dead—died of fever on his flagship—and Antonius is marching here with the troops from Lissus!"

PHARSALUS

The Tenth, the Seventh, the Sixth; the Thirteenth, the Twelfth, the Eleventh; the Eighth, the Ninth. Twenty-two thousand foot, a thousand horse. The Tenth, the Seventh, the Sixth; the Thirteenth, the Twelfth, the Eleventh; the Eighth, the Ninth. Twenty-two thousand foot, a thousand horse.

Quiet! Quiet!

The stream afforded sufficient protection to the flank. The Ninth Legion, which had not yet recovered from the blows it had received before Dyrrhachium, was posted there. Close beside it was the Eighth, close-packed, rolled up into an iron ball which would have to serve at once as defence and support. The rest were normally spaced; he could rely on them. On the extreme right was his beloved Tenth, which must protect the free wing.

The stream afforded sufficient protection; so it was not too venturous to draw off the whole of the German cavalry, and employ them as a flank protection to the right wing; their thick, broad skulks were hard enough to take the shrewdest knocks.

Now he turned his gaze to where the legions of the Senate's army were marching toward him. Column after column! Directly opposite the Tenth were the two legions which he had once been obliged to transfer to Pompeius. Not very intelligent, this, to oppose Caesar's crack legion by troops which had once served under him! And further on were Asiatic and Italian legions. Then the two Syrian legions, the remnants of Crassus' army. Even at this distance one could guess, from their worn uniforms and their haggard faces, something of the misery and hardship they had suffered.—And then again recruits, and then a Spanish legion, and last of all the Cilician. They would not give the Ninth much trouble.

Where was Pompeius? On his left wing, directly opposite Caesar. Was this because he did not trust the two transferred legions, or because he meant to deliver the main assault here?

Over yonder all was in movement. The whole front was already filled, and still column after column came forward, pushing into the last gaps, deepening the front; stones of the gigantic wall which blocked the way from the stream to the hills, the way to Pharsalus.

Over yonder all was movement. Now the cavalry were moving forward, close to the place where Pompeius had taken his stand: close-packed squadrons, an incalculable mass. What

would be their strength? Five thousand? Six? They halted in a compact mass, stirrup by stirrup, horse by horse. How many of them on the other wing? None? None!

A sudden flash of enlightenment! This was Pompeius' great throw: this mass of cavalry was to fall upon Caesar's horse, put them to flight, fall upon the Tenth, flank and rear, and from that position roll up the front and shatter it. A great idea, flawless in conception, infallible in its effect. The commandant halted before the wide-wide row of horses' heads, and his piebald charger, held in with an iron hand, thrust out its muzzle as though sniffing the air, and seemed to be striving forwards with all its might.

Did he not know that piebald? Was it not the same that had borne Labienus through all the Gallic wars! And could he not see, under the gilt helmet, the cold, handsome face with the cruel vulpine mouth? Today Labienus hoped to win his spurs against his sometime lord and master!

No!

His eyes swept the extended ranks of his own legions. At a sign, Pollio galloped up on a snorting horse. His excited gaze grew calm under the steely eyes that rested upon him.

"The third line of all the legions is under my personal command, and will attack only upon my express order.—Off you go!"

Pollio rushed off, reined up beside young Sulla, the commander of the right wing, gave him the order, galloped on to the centre, repeated the order to Domitius, then to the left wing, to Marcus Antonius, who was standing, calm and careless, beside his horse, chattering with a young aspirant. The troops of the third line moved back a little, grounded their spears and shields, and waited, relaxing their muscles.

Was that enough? It was not enough! If Labienus managed to turn the flank this reserve would come too late. There must be something else, something which would either hold the attack or render it ineffective.

Or render it ineffective! A ram driven into the mass where

it was least expected, which would turn it from its direction, and drive it back whence it came, and then—"

"Hirtius!"

"Imperator!" Close before him, white as chalk, was the face of his adjutant.

"One cohort from each of six legions. The first cohort. These six cohorts are to take up their position to the rear of our cavalry, and await further orders—from me personally. Off you go!"

Now the plan was complete. Now, come on, Pompeius! Charge, Labienus, you renegade!

Over yonder the troops had apparently stopped marching up. Long, long, shrieking signals rang out—Roman signals. Rome against Rome!

A gentle pressure of the thigh, and with nodding head the white horse moved off at a walk along the front. Between the Sixteenth and the Thirteenth his rider reined him in.

"Comrades! The decisive day has come. I need not require you to be bold and courageous, I need not assure you of my eternal gratitude: the enemy is before you, and there is no need to say more. We did not seek the quarrel, we have left nothing untried which might have saved the shedding of citizens' blood and preserved the peace. They have forced us to fight, have pressed the sword into our hand. So now they shall learn that we know how to use it." One glance at all those fierce, eager faces; a few words that forced their way to his lips were suppressed, and then, pealing over the whole front, a single word rang out:

"Charge!"

"Alala!" The officers leading, the first and second lines set off at the double, their spears in hand ready for throwing, tearing down the gentle slope toward the Pompeians.

The Pompeians were not moving. . . were not moving! That was a cunning thought! Caesar's men were to attack, breathless and exhausted at the outset, the fully-rested enemy awaiting them! That must not happen! Halt! Quick march!

The order was not needed; the brave fellows had them-

selves perceived the trick; half-way to the enemy they fell into marching step of their own accord, and went stamping rhythmically forwards in perfect alignment. Their lungs would have breath enough now; their arms and legs would have strength to fight! The hope of the Pompeians has miscarried.

Now they had only a little way to go. Again, of their own accord, the troops broke into a run; the salvoes of spears crossed one another in the air, and then it became a matter of hand-to-hand fighting.

The white horse and its rider raced after the charging troops, and plunged into the heart of the fray.

The clanging of shields, the flash of swords—these had long lost their novelty. Since the day of Mytilene this living tide of steel had risen and ebbed away so often that it had no more surprises in store for him. But now to see if the hand of the tactician had retained its cunning!

There was a movement in the ranks of the cavalry on Pompeius' right wing. Now was the moment! The white horse raced back to the Caesarean cavalry.

"Don't hold your ground! Go to meet them, and then give way. They will run into a trap!" Already he was gone; drawing rein beside the six cohorts, ablaze with excitement, his eyes starting from his head, but motionless, on a motionless horse.

Now they were coming, and the ground shook beneath the thundering hooves: the innumerable squadrons of Labienus, their long lances in position, the blood-lust gleaming in the eyes beneath the bronze helmets. They plunged against the little body of German horse; a few blows were exchanged, and then Caesar's cavalry turned and fled.

Labienus and his horsemen were not concerned with them. After a few lengths they checked and began to wheel.

The distance between horse and horse increased; excitedly the detachments collided as they wheeled on curves of longer or shorter radius, according to their position.

"Now forward! Now into them!" The sword pointed at

the entangled mass of cavalry; and for the moment they were helpless. Again the order was not needed; the six cohorts had understood. Yelling, they stormed forward, accompanied by Caesar. A centurion appeared beside him.

"Imperator!"

Caesar glanced down.

"Crastinus!" he cried, in joyful recognition. "You!"

"Today you shall have reason to thank me—dead or alive!" He was gone; the steel spear-head plunged into the mass of the cavalry; it began to divide it, to cut it to pieces, spreading a panic terror. For a while the mêlée surged heavily to and fro; then individual horsemen began to break away; then many at a time—and then—all!

They fled in senseless terror, scattering in all directions; some into the ranks of Caesar's legions, where the nearest sword despatched them, some into their own ranks, where they wrought confusion and destruction, and others out into the plain, into the hills . . .

Pompeius' left flank lay yonder uncovered, and the six cohorts, supported by the Germanic horsemen, who had returned roaring with enthusiasm and pugnacity, proceeded to turn and envelop it; Caesar was carrying out Pompeius' own plan!

Pompeius? Where was he? But a moment ago he was still to be seen in the ranks of the left wing, in his fine red general's mantle, turning his crested helmet from side to side, now toward the embattled front, now toward the attacking cavalry.

Could such a thing be? A single horseman was galloping swiftly toward the Pompeian camp. His head was bare; the red mantle was streaming behind him, caught over one shoulder; now it was torn away; it fluttered in his hand, which rolled it convulsively into a bundle; the enemy commander had given up the battle and was leaving the field!

Now for the final stroke! A wave of the hand, and the troops of the third line stood prepared for action. At a second signal they ran forward, without a check, reached their

own front, struggled through it, charged down upon the enemy front, hammered it until they broke through—first here and there only, but then at all points, shattering and crumbling it; until after one moment of hesitation the whole mass of the enemy troops turned, and whirled back to the camp, inextricably entangled with the Caesareans, still furiously cutting their way into them.

One last, penetrating glance. The rings of the lorica that confined his breast burst and fell away, his heart gave one heavy thump; then Caesar drew himself up to his full height and dashed his sword back into the scabbard.

Victory!

MY BROTHER POMPEIUS!

Two horsemen were the first to appear: Gauls. They rode forward in a quick trot, constantly crossing and re-crossing the highway, turning aside into bridle-paths, returning, climbing hills, halting and peering round, slithering down the slopes on their tall, nimble horses, and riding on again.

About half a mile behind them came a company of German troops. The trot of their heavy, powerful chargers was rather slower than the smooth, nimble gait of the lighter Gallic horses; but since their riders kept to the highway, contenting themselves with keeping a lookout on either side, they were able to advance as quickly as the nimbler scouts.

Behind them, so close upon their heels that the dust raised by their passage had hardly time to sink, came the main body. Before them, in the red mantle by which a whole world was to know him, rode the Imperator. He rode with a slack rein, giving the horse its head, bending slightly forward, as was his wont, and thrusting out a face in which every muscle was tense as though the three or four inches gained thereby were essential to the achievement of his purpose.

Caesar was riding after the fugitive Pompeius.

He had received the capitulation of the Senate's army—defeated and encircled, cut off by land and water—in the

saddle, and he had not left it since. Even the orders of the day were given as he rode; the whole of the cavalry was with him, and the Sixth Legion followed by forced marches. The Pompeians were to be divided into legions; these were to go with Domitius to Asia Minor, where the petty kings were trying to profit by the quarrel of the giants; of the legion and a half before Athens the legion would withdraw to Rhodes; the Illyrian garrisons were to be strengthened by fifteen cohorts from Italy; Gabinius would take over the command; while the bulk of the Pharsalian troops would go to Campania to recuperate.—And one thing must not be forgotten: a monument to Crastinus was to be set up on the battlefield, at once a tomb and a memorial of victory! He had earned it as no other man had done!

Antonius, riding at Caesar's side, had bowed his head to this hail of orders; now he turned his horse aside and reined it in. For a moment only Caesar could see the hand lifted in salute; then the cloud of dust that enwrapped them all swallowed up the figure of the young cavalry-leader, and leaving all the rest behind him the victor of Pharsalus scoured along the highway which had been followed, the day before, by the fleeing Pompeius—to the coast, to the sea.

None of his adjutants or orderly officers dared to approach him, to break the silence that surrounded him. If he looked round he saw that all eyes were fixed upon him as though they would divine the thoughts which were maturing behind his forehead, presently to become new deeds.

But Caesar was not thinking of any new war. For the moment he had forgotten such enemies as Cato and Labienus. Now, at this moment, it seemed to him that the fight was at an end, as though the gesture with which he had sheathed his sword at Pharsalus had been a final gesture; now he was riding not to battle but in pursuit of peace, in pursuit of the reconciliation with Pompeius which he now desired with all his heart. He was conscious of nothing but the longing to throw his arms round his old comrade, to press the kiss of friendship upon his cheeks.

Was it not madness that they should be fighting one another? What cause of dispute really stood between them? He was ready to grant his friend everything which a man could desire. Was Pompeius unwilling to stand behind him? How willingly would Caesar draw him to his side, sharing rank and dignities with him as with a brother! Let the old lion enjoy the honors he had earned! Caesar would see to it that the splendor of their position should be invested with the needful power; that it should possess the creative force which was the rarest ornament of power. To them united the world belonged: why should they quarrel over what they possessed in common?

But the crew who were thinking only of their own advantage, and who had forced their way between him and Pompeius, must be overthrown and banished as they deserved. When the reorganization of the world was in question the mob of arrogant fools and criminals must hold their peace; all too long had the vote of a Senate, which could point to no other merit than the possession of long-dead ancestors, ruled the world to its hurt and their own; from now onwards only one thing was possible—the dictatorship of the creative spirit.

From the head of the column a single rider came hurrying back: one of the two Gauls. He announced that they were nearing a town: Larissa.

Caesar packed his hopes and desires away in his inmost heart; in an instant he was back in the present. Briefly he gave his orders: they would rest until the legions following by forced marches had overtaken them; in the meantime they must discover where Pompeius was going. Then, at a quick pace, he rode on towards the town, which he reached as night was falling.

The legions came in after midnight. As was his custom, Caesar set out again immediately, taking the road for Amphipolis, which lay at a distance of some hundred and seventy miles.

That he had succeeded in reducing the lead of the fugitives

did but increase his longing for Pompeius. At moments this became so overpowering that he almost seemed to see the grave, swarthy face of his friend before him; the rather melancholy features, the large, brown eyes, which looked at him silently and searchingly as ever. He thought of the hours without number which they had spent together, the plans which they had made in common, in the days when they and fat, bull-necked Crassus had been masters of the world; when the Senate, artfully humbled and impotent, had taken its orders from them. Now all was changed. Crassus was lying in Sinnaka, Pompeius was a fugitive without a country, and he himself, Caesar, once a Roman Consul, was a rebel in arms against Rome.

Nevertheless, he did not feel downhearted. He was full of a passionate confidence that all would still be well. If only he could succeed in overtaking Pompeius, so that he could speak his mind to him! Did ever two men stand closer? Would not the first warm glance, the first cordial word tear down the wall which alien hands had built between them? Pompeius must really understand that his place was not with the Senate, which was simply trying to exploit him, to use him as an instrument, but with him, Caesar, who offered him the hand of friendship, who was ready to share the government of Rome and the world with him.

And had not Pompeius been more than a friend to him? Had Caesar not given him the dearest thing he possessed—his only daughter? Such a bond could never be quite dissolved; something of it must still remain, of that inexpressibly sweet fragrance which hovers over memories and recalls something of their former life. It must be strong enough to bring Pompeius' heart back to Caesar, to renew that unity of which they had once been so happily conscious. The time must come again when Caesar could call Pompeius by the name which was at once a promise and a fulfilment: "My brother Pompeius!"

These were the thoughts which filled Caesar's mind during

his three days' ride to Amphipolis. He entered the town on the third day, shortly before noon.

He came too late. An hour earlier Pompeius had left the harbour on the only available ship.

TO EGYPT!

It was sultry and oppressive, despite the light northerly breeze, which swelled the great sails until the long line of ships seemed to fly over the water like a flock of wild geese. The noonday heat brooded over the blue, endless plain, and the god of the silver bow, now that his steeds had reached the highest point of their course, was shooting down great sheaves of his burning arrows.

Caesar lay on the deck of the flagship, under an outspread awning. Leaning his head and shoulders on the piled up pillows, he took from the book-holder beside him roll after roll of papyrus, and examined them, trying to impress all their details on his mind. They were maps of Alexandria, of Lake Mareotis, of Asia Minor. In every harbor at which he had touched his first question had been whether any maps were to be had. He had bought hundreds in all: in Mytilene, in Ephesus, in Rhodes. Now he was brooding over them, taking in every last detail.

Caesar's luck, of which he had boasted to the shuddering sailor before Dyrrhachium, had once more become a reality. Heaven itself had sent him ships, just as he was trying to put his troops across the Hellespont in the fishermen's boats. He had to laugh when he remembered the disconcerted expression of the Pompeian admiral. If he had only known the actual state of Caesar's forces! A handful of cavalry on failing horses, drooping exhausted in the saddle, incapable of lifting a weapon; an exhausted legion, panting and struggling onwards in disorder, men and packhorses alike on the point of foundering. Although they were a young legion—they had been recruited after the Gauls' fight for freedom—they had already learned what Caesar's forced marches meant in Gaul, Spain and Illyria; but this present effort was too much for

them: dragging their baggage and weapons after them, they reeled onwards, with unseeing eyes and laboring lungs, and leaden, wounded feet that trudged stupidly on, all but refusing to bear them; more like machines than men.

But the Pompeian admiral did not know all this; in the narrows of the Hellespont he saw, to the right and the left, the shores occupied by Caesar's troops; he saw the flash of weapons, and heard the curt, hoarse words of command uttered by the officers (and it was all they could do to give an audible command!) And before him stood the very last man he had thought to encounter here, the terrible and unconquerable general whose very name was enough to make a veteran legion turn pale. Then and there he furled his sails and surrendered his fleet; ten, excellent, roomy ships of war, which an hour later were overflowing with a rejoicing and revivified host of Caesarean soldiers.

Caesar let fall the map and took another from the bookcase. It was once more a map of Alexandria, a detailed plan of the mole, with the breakwater, the Heptastadion, which led to the island lighthouse of Pharos. His eyes ran over the coast-line, scrutinizing, measuring, estimating. The softened mood of the ride to Amphipolis was gone; Pompeius had the start of him, and would find a Roman garrison in Alexandria; there was nothing left but to fight. And this must be the last battle.

The Imperator looked up, and gazed unseeingly into the distance. In his mind's eye the possibilities which still remained to Pompeius began to unfold themselves. Defensive measures were weighed and rejected; the idea of an offensive emerged. He must land at Lochias and capture the lighthouse. Between the two claws Pompeius would bleed to death.

Caesar's unseeing eyes suddenly became aware of the horizon. It seemed to him that something had broken the misty skyline. Yes . . . every moment it was growing plainer. He gazed at it and wondered why the forward watch reported nothing; he was about to call the man, but some inexplicable force prevented him. Motionless, he gazed at the unknown

thing, which seemed now to be making directly for the ship.

He could not guess what it might be: it was too small for a ship, even for a boat. It looked like a stake, a pillar, driving past him out of the infinite distance—a pillar of about the height of a man, rising from the waves; as though a man were gliding towards him over the almost unruffled sea . . .

It was a man! Now he could clearly distinguish the figure: the head, the broad shoulders, the loosely-hanging arms, and the legs, whose outline was plainly visible through the folds of the toga. Caesar felt an uncontrollable horror creeping up the marrow of his spine. Despite the sultry heat of the day his temples were icy cold. And still there was no hail from the forward watch!

Now the figure was so near that he could distinguish the details of its garments: a tunic, and over this a splendid toga with a purple border: the senatorial robe. But the purple was not confined to the border of the toga; it had spread over the whole of the man's garments, painting them all with its deep crimson, so that only a few white patches were visible. It was as though the man's garments were drenched with blood, flowing from some deep wound—yes, it was blood!

Although the mysterious figure did not move, it was none the less approaching with great rapidity. Now it was within four hundred paces—now two hundred, a hundred, fifty, thirty—

Caesar fell back upon his cushions, incapable of uttering a sound. He had recognized the rigid, ghastly face, in which the extinguished eyes gazed into the unknown. *Pompeius!*

With a terrible effort he struggled up from the cushions. He groped about him, managed to get hold of his stylus, and thrust the point of it into his arm. The steel sank deep into his flesh; the blood welled out, and he felt an excruciating pain: he *was* awake!

But the phantom was there. Hardly five paces distant from him, and visible in every detail. The wound was not visible, but the throat was red with blood; it must be at the back of the head, or the neck. The mouth was drawn convulsively,

but the lips were highly compressed; the cheeks were sunken; in the lifeless eyes was an expression of infinite amazement and dawning anger.

Now it was there before him; now it was gliding past; now it had gone by.

Caesar had not the courage or the strength to turn round. A hammer seemed to be beating against his skull from within, mercilessly shattering the least of his thoughts. He strove with the horror that was in him, but could not fight it down; he could no longer think, or judge, or see. He knew only that something terrible had happened.

It was some minutes before he had regained his self-control. He rose on his elbows, and looked behind him in the direction taken by the phantom.

He saw nothing but the boundless plain of water: the spectre had vanished.

CLEOPATRA

The rigid figures of the white-clad priests lined the corridors like so many statues; but there was ill-concealed anxiety in their composed, earth-brown faces. In anxious scrutiny they gazed after the man who strode past them with wide, alert eyes, his forehead divided by a vertical furrow, gazing straight ahead, and treading the gaily-colored tiles with a vigorous, stamping gait.

His retinue had the same gait and bearing; erect, and heedless of hieratic pomp, they walked with the ringing Roman stride that had covered half the world, knowing that they were the lords of the soil wherever they trod. The crooked figure of Theodotus and the fat, brutal eunuch face of Pothinus might be seen in the Imperator's following. Their features betrayed their intense excitement, and also something like fear; they had been present when the head of Pompeius had been shown to Caesar on landing, they had witnessed his outburst of grief, and had heard his oath of vengeance. And although this was the first time that they

had seen him face to face, they knew of him all that they needed to know—and above all, that he kept his oaths.

Already the procession had passed through three courtyards, three corridors and three halls. The swarm of slaves and lackeys who filled the outer rooms had disappeared. Here and there there were sentries, standing haughtily before a door of a curtain, gazing deliberately over the intruders' heads: the noble guards. A profound silence prevailed; the footsteps of the Roman general sounded doubly loud as their echo came ringing back from the painted walls.

Before one of the curtains the Roman found himself incommoded by a spear-shaft which was suddenly sloped before his legs. He halted, gazed with astonishment at the very tall sentry, and then, with a deliberate lack of comprehension in his eyes, he turned toward his two Egyptian companions. Theodotus came forward and exchanged a few words with the sentry.

"The Queen's apartments," he explained to the Roman commander.

"It is the queen I wish to see," was the very decisive answer.

There was some hesitation; then, timidly:

"One must inquire first—must announce you—"

"Well, let some one do so."

"Will you wait?"

"Not too long."

More hesitation. Pothinus and Theodotus whispered together; then the old man slipped through the curtain, which immediately closed behind him.

One of the Roman officers approached his commander.

"Caesar," he said, under his breath, "it is not healthy here. We ought to have brought an escort."

"No need for anxiety, Hirtius," answered Caesar. "We were never safer. Do you not know that in all the world there is no one who dares to harm a hair of a Roman's head?"

"Pompeius thought the same," murmured Hirtius, "and yet—"

The bright eyes grew melancholy.

"Pompeius made the mistake of begging for help. A Roman should never beg."

Shrugging his shoulders, Hirtius fell back and relapsed into silence. The little party waited in perfect immobility. One by one the seconds whirred away into infinity.

At last the curtain moved again. Theodotus appeared.

"The queen will receive the Roman commander," he piped, in his shrill, senile voice. "Alone," he added quickly, as the whole retinue was about to move forward.

Caesar had already stretched out his hand to the curtain, when Hirtius laid a trembling right hand on his arm.

"Caesar!" said the young man, imploringly.

"No need for anxiety, Hirtius," repeated Caesar. Gently he removed the adjutant's fingers and strode through the curtained doorway.

He found himself in a spacious hall, darker than those which he had passed through, which some unknown and invisible source of illumination bathed in a dim twilight, so that only the brightest colors of the wall-paintings emerged from the shadow. The floor was a mosaic representing the water of a tank, with lotus-blossoms and fish. No human being was visible.

With quick strides Caesar crossed the room and approached a curtain which, when he had all but reached it, opened as though by magic. Conjuring-tricks! he thought, and strode through. Would the curtain close again behind him? But he did not look round to see.

A second hall, even darker than the first. Here and there a patch of scarlet or flame-color gleamed on the walls. The floor was of grey stone, and strewn with flowers.

Once more a curtain which opened of itself. Caesar passed through it, and came to a standstill.

The room which he had entered was small, compared with the others, being barely as large as a large sitting-room. It was bathed in a dim red light, and a narcotic perfume filled the air. Costly carpets covered the walls, and thick mats were spread over the floor.

Precisely opposite the doorway by which Caesar had entered was a throne-like seat beneath a canopy. On it sat the image of some unknown deity, erect, in a still, hieratic pose, the lofty royal tiara with the double uraeus on its head, in its left hand the long sceptre, and in its right the mystic smybol of life: a young and beautiful woman. So natural was the work of the sculptor that one might almost have thought that the figure was alive. The slender limbs, the delicate wrists and ankles, were flawless, and the exquisite features of the noble face were perfectly modelled. Only its absolute immobility, the rigid glance of the slightly oblique and half-closed eyes, betrayed the fact that it was only an image.

And suddenly this image opened its eyes to the full, and with an imperceptible movement turned its head towards the intruder, who felt the full force of the gaze of two black pupils, around which the light green iris formed only a narrow ring.

Now it was Caesar who stood rigid and immoveable. Something that he had never yet felt constricted his throat, and weighed upon his heart like an infinitely sweet incubus. It was as though invisible fetters had been forged round him, preventing the slightest movement. The thought flashed through his mind that he ought to defend himself, to shake off this paralysis. But strangely enough, he had not even the desire to do so; he wanted nothing but this one thing: to stand there, and allow these eyes to have their will of him: these unspeakably and superhumanly magnificent eyes, which moved him to the very depths, and yet appeased him.

How long did he stand thus, for minutes, hours, eternities? He did not know, he did not care, he was conscious only of a sense of consummation.

It was she who at last broke the silence. With a gracious gesture she invited him a approach, and said, in a clear voice, that reminded him of the rippling of a little waterfall:

"Do you speak Greek?"

"Yes, lady," replied Caesar quickly, bowing his head.

A bewitching smile parted her red, exquisitely curved lips.

"We have Romans here," she continued, in Greek. "Romans who came here with Catinus. But I have had no occasion to learn the language. Of course—and her smile sparkled with gentle mockery—"if I had had reason to expect the advent of such a famous guest—"

"You are laughing at me, lady," interrupted Caesar, quickly. His former rigidity had vanished, and a feeling of lightness and freedom filled his breast; he felt almost as though he could fly. He breathed freely and easily, but it seemed to him that a small, sharp flame was burning in his heart.

She repudiated his words with a slight gesture, while her eyes, in rapid scrutiny, passed over him from head to foot.

"You are better known among us than you think," she said. She added, merrily: "We use your name to frighten little children. If nothing else has any effect, we say: 'Caesar is coming!' Then the naughtiest, noisiest child is quiet."

Caesar found that he too could smile again.

"A new vocation, to add to the many others which I have pursued!"

She, however, was already grave again. With her elbows propped on her knees, and her fine, resolute chin supported on her hands, she once more looked full at him with her enigmatical eyes. Half to him, half to herself, she spoke under her breath:

"And now you have really come—just as we used to tell children that you would come: powerful, menacing, terrible. There is wrath about your brows, and destruction upon your lips. You have come into this country, hitherto unknown to you, a country that for you was at the end of the world, and with which you had no relations of any kind—and you proceed to subdue it to your will. What have you in your mind? What do you want with this unhappy land, which, apart from all else, has suffered so sorely under the dispute between my brother and myself? What will its fate be in your hands? What do you intend to do with this melancholy country?"

Caesar was passionately moved. Something that he could

not name, something stronger than himself, drew him to the queen's throne, and threw him on his knees before her.

"I will do with it," he said, "what you desire!"

She drew herself up to her full height, and her eyes were like two blue flames:

"Then make me its real queen!"

FULFILMENT

The world had sunk out of sight . . .

Over the shimmering waves of the river came a resplendent barge, swiftly propelled by flying, flashing oars; and under the swelling purple awnings which hid them from curious glances sat two lovers . . .

Hand in hand and cheek to cheek they listened dreamily to the faint melody that sounded softly from the vessel's lofty bow. Wholly at peace with themselves and the world, each entirely lost in the other, intoxicated with a bliss unknown and unsuspected, these two were on their wedding journey.

What they had been was forgotten; the chains that bound them to terrestrial things had fallen from their limbs. Very remote were all those alien and unwanted people who might have troubled the heaven which they had found. In sacred and holy union they had withdrawn into their sublime purity, listening in happy silence to the song that went with them like a blessing, as though they had been listening to the heavenly choirs . . .

"Is the sun burning you?"

Silence.

"Does your arm ache?"

Silence.

"Is there anything that you want now—anything at all?"

Nothing, save to lie thus, in blessed awareness of the unutterable power that makes body and soul as one . . .

This was to have been a voyage of conquest; one of those stormy flights which had borne the eagle all over the world. The keen eyes had already espied the quarry; the steely talons

were already opened to sink themselves into it, to subdue it—and to destroy.

It was to have been a voyage of conquest—and it became a wedding journey. It was as though the eagle, so sure of himself and his might, had flown into the sun; in the sun's ineffable blaze the steel melted, thought and knowledge and will were consumed—and nothing was left of them all but an emotion, a blissful fire, that nothing could cool, an infinite, ineffable love . . .

The hand that could hold the sword so firmly now closed—how gently!—round the delicate fingers that nestled within it. The head that was used to revolve schemes to shake the world to its foundations now pressed itself—how tenderly!—into the tresses that made its pillow. The heart that had beaten so calmly and steadily in countless moments of deadly peril had opened wide to receive into itself that other heart which had lain upon it so close, so close!

This was no fever that deluded the senses; this was no intoxication that bewildered the soul: this was liberation, escape into the beyond, fulfilment, salvation—the ultimate truth.

There was once a man who sought to conquer the whole world, in order to reshape it to his heart's desire. Ever since he could remember this fire had been in him, this urge that drove him forward, ever further and further, toward aims of which he himself was hardly aware. All his life, decade after decade, he had dedicated himself to the service of this urge, had applied the whole of his stupendous energies to the achievement of these aims.

Where now was the fire of which he had always been conscious? Where were the aims toward which he had striven? They were now so remote that not even a dream of them could find its way back to him.

For although his ever-active mind did not recognize it, although his ever-desirous heart had not striven for it, there was now within him a profound knowledge, a knowledge

which he could never again forget, a knowledge of the ultimate truth:

There is only one true and real thing in this world: and that is Love.

Silence! Silence! Trouble not the sacred moment; bow the head before those holy hours. Here something is consummated that you cannot grasp, something that you cannot comprehend with your senses and understanding. A miracle has been accomplished, one which the supreme Powers have devised from the beginning of time; a miracle within the reach of all, and achieved by hardly any. Two have become one; through two bodies flows a single stream of blood; in two hearts rises the radiant splendor of one soul, which lifts its devout eyes to the heaven from which it has descended.

What is then left of the merely human, the merely earthly? What does it signify that one of these hearts beats in the bosom of a young queen, and the other in the breast of an elderly general? What are names at such times? Cleopatra . . . Caesar . . . collocations of sounds which have lost all meaning. For here the eternal has emerged, beyond space and time and cognition and understanding; an eternal and universal value. Deity itself has descended here: to create itself anew in this oneness.

But now that this creation is accomplished a new world arises. Not incomplete and full of flaws as is the earth, but pure, flawless and perfect—the final, perfect chord in the great harmony.

Over the sacred waters that flow through this new world flies the bark in which two who are one are journeying toward the stars . . .

"MY QUEEN!"

"WHAT are you thinking of, that you should try to influence me? Who are you, that you should dare to approach me before I send for you? What has given you the audacity to try to bend me to your will?"

Hirtius was silent.

"Have I made you so great already that you presume to judge my actions? Do you know me so perfectly that you try to read me like a book? Have I ever given myself to you so completely that you should permit yourself to think and feel for me?"

Hirtius was silent.

Caesar went to the table and struck the back of his hand against the carefully-piled despatches; the whole pile lost its equilibrium, and slithered down, faintly rustling, on to the surface of the table.

"Despatches! What can they tell me that I did not foresee long ago? What can there be in them of any real importance? Importance! What is important? Can you tell me that?"

Hirtius was silent; he stooped to pick up a few sheets which had fallen to the floor. With a gesture of impatience Caesar took them from him, and glanced at them quickly, one after the other.

"The Consulate for the next five years! I was Consul before the Senate and the people were so gracious as to appoint me!—the Dictatorship! I was Dictator too—no, I am Dictator, whether the blockheads in Rome accept the fact or not!" He turned to Hirtius with flashing eyes, and held the crumpled bundle of despatches before his face. "The Censorship for life! The casting vote at elections! The right to grant provinces, to declare war, to conclude peace! Mere matters of form! Mere stupidities! I have no need of this worthless rubbish now!" He drew himself up; his great, flashing eyes were lakes of fire. "The vermin realize that their rule is drawing to a close; that there is at last someone who is the master of them all—of *all!*" His voice, which even as he began was loud and ringing, swelled into a shout, as though he stood on a battle-field, as though all men must hear him. It pealed through the room, and the walls, as though startled, flung back the echo. "I am the master of the world! I! I! If it pleases me I will seize the earth like a ball and lift it up to the stars: if it pleases me I will let it fall from my hand, heedless of whether it is shattered as it falls! That is my affair,

and mine alone! For from this day onwards there is only one will: Caesar's!"

Hirtius drooped his head. His hands, still busied with collecting and arranging the despatches, were trembling. Caesar continued, in a quieter tone—but the thunder was still in his throat:

"Did you imagine that you could master me? Were my orders no longer sufficient for you? Am I asleep if I do not speak to you every day? Why have I made Pollio, and Marcus Antonius, and you, and others, my pupils? So that I should still have to give my time to trivial details? Do you find it so difficult to provide for such a secondary business as the government of Rome unless I meet you daily to tell you what I wish? Must you trouble me day after day, simply in order that I should show the iron fist which is the only thing which the Roman rabble appears to respect? What is the use of the whole ridiculous comedy? What is the use of the lying letters which are supposed to show the proletariat of the capital that I, in Egypt, here at the source of life, have no other care than to think of their welfare?"

Again he was silent; he strode across the room and back, stood still, and cried, with renewed exasperation:

"What is it—what do you really want of me?"

Hirtius was silent: he looked at Caesar with eyes full of tears; he swallowed a sob. Caesar himself answered his question:

"You are wondering why I remain here so long; you are asking yourself in vain what can have checked my victorious progress; you are afraid that I have run aground, that I have lost the energy to achieve my aims!

"My aims! Hirtius! Were those aims that I followed really my goal? Was all that I strove for of any real value? Was I, who knew how different I was from all other men, to follow the paths, to pursue the career of the ordinary man? What good fortune"—he raised his folded hands toward the heavens —"what good fortune that I saw the truth in time! That I recognized in time that there is only one end, only one thing

of value—only one thing in the world: to meet another human being into whom a man can throw himself with all the energy of his soul, with all the passion of his heart, in whom he can blissfully lose himself, only to find himself enriched a thousandfold, a millionfold!"

He laid his hands on the young man's shoulders and gazed deep into his eyes. The mutter of thunder had quite gone from his voice; it was now veiled and tender, as with an ineffable intoxication:

"Hirtius—I have met this other human being—and with her my true goal, and one that I achieved in a single assault. Today, when I know what I possess, I tremble at the mere thought that I might have passed it by, that I might have died without ever knowing it. Look at me, Hirtius, my dear son! Look at my face! Is it not changed? Is there not in it a radiance that singles it out from all other human faces? Your eyes cannot be so dull; they must see that something has passed into my features, my features that you have known so long, which is more than human; a reflection of the divinity that transfigures my whole being and makes me the happy brother of all living things! Do you not see it, Hirtius? Do you not see it?

"Your world! What is your world to me? Keep it, divide it among yourselves, be happy in it! I have no part in it! I have found my world, a world which belongs to me alone, and which to me means everything, everything, everything!"

Hirtius was silent. Over his immobile cheeks the tears were streaming.

Caesar, turning from him, quickly snatched up his toga and threw it about his shoulders. Then, turning back to Hirtius, he said, with a tender smile:

"Go, my son, go! Now you know what holds me here; now you understand why I will hear no more of battle and conquest, of lordship and power. I have cast all that behind me, and now I go my way to the eternal peace."

He strode towards the door, passing Hirtius, who stood

motionless, and only followed him with eyes which could hardly see through their veil of tears.

At the door Caesar tarried. The obstinate immobility of this waiting figure disquieted him against his will. Quickly he flung the question over his shoulder:

"Anything else to say?"

"Everything!" The word broke from Hirtius in a desperate outcry. "I have to say the thing I came to say!"

A hand of ice gripped at Caesar's hot, wildly beating heart.

"Speak!"

"Caesar! My lord! My master! I felt all this, I knew all this long ago! And I never would have dared to trouble your happiness, but that fate, mightier than all else, has compelled me to do so!"

All the tenderness, all the incoherence had vanished from Caesar's features. The face that he turned on Hirtius was hard as stone.

"Speak!" he repeated urgently.

"Alexandria is in revolt!" shouted Hirtius. "Theodotus and Pothinus have stirred up the whole nation! We, with our thousand men, are surrounded by millions; the palace is besieged; we are in a trap, and they have sworn that you and the queen shall be—"

"The queen? *My* queen?" A roar like that of an infuriated lion. "Sound the alarm! Send me the officers! *My queen?* They shall learn who Caesar is!"

CAESAR RIDES

Caesar rode . . .

The aftertaste of the last few days was still with him: the miracle that the supreme Powers had lavished upon him; as yet his intellect alone could grasp what had befallen, lifting him out of the bloody and desperate battle into the radiance of a renewed glory; he could not yet feel its reality; the wealth of impressions that lay within the purview of his intellectual vision was as yet unorganized and incoherent; the attack on the royal palace, the Egyptians coming on again

and again like mad dogs, that seemed to have lost all sensation save the sole lust of destruction; the battles on land and water, the fight for the Pharos, for the breakwater; the desperate defence against overwhelming odds behind hastily erected barricades; the hand to hand fighting on the roofs of houses that gave way under their burden, on swampy river shores that imprisoned the feet with a sinister, sucking sound, in the waves of the sea, in the current of the Nile, where every man who fell disappeared without a sound—fighting by day and by night—with no time to think, no time to act beyond the passing second—a wild nightmare of fire and blood and iron, of quivering human bodies, a nightmare from which there was no awaking but the last of all . . .

And yet . . . in the intervals there were hours full of such an ecstasy as is vouchsafed only to those who are dedicated to death. To drain the last draught to the dregs, just because it may indeed be the last; to sink in a vortex of passion that robbed him of breath and consciousness; to abate the fury of battle in the strife of love—to hurry back to the battle with lips yet moist with kisses and bleeding from his lover's teeth; to squander his life like one who has closed the account, and flings away the remnant.

And then, amidst that profound readiness for death, the sun of Pelusium, the victory that was vouchsafed to hopeless men like a reprieve from death, a victory which they realized without being able to understand it, the saving thunderbolt that shattered all resistance as the lightning shatters a tree.

The gods of the land were not kindly disposed to their children; the giant army which was to have crushed Caesar and his little company lay drowned in the broad stream whose muddy waters eddied slowly seaward, had become the prey of the deep and its inhabitants, the hideous and gigantic reptiles which the Egyptians accounted as sacred, and which were now fattening on the bodies of their worshippers.

If now the victor should choose to punish the rebellious city, if he himself were to hurl the brand that would lay Alexandria in ashes, if he were to burn the city, as the pride

of Alexandria, her two and seventy warships, had been burned, no one would stay his hand; the victory of Pelusium had broken the backbone of Egypt.

And now Caesar rode . . .

Now that he once more felt the glossy flanks of his horse beneath him all that to the Alexandrians had seemed his essential self had fallen away from him. They knew nothing of the man within their walls—and what they had heard of his iron resolution, his imperious masterfulness, the towering greatness of his thoughts and deeds, seemed to them to have perished for ever in the fairy dream of the royal palace. Until the howl of the jackal had aroused the flower-bedecked tiger, and he had stretched out his terrible paws, whose every stroke meant destruction, and hurled himself upon them, lord of the battle which they had forced upon him! Now there was an end of the sweet relaxation which the magic moons of the past year had bestowed upon him; gone was the self-forgetful devotion which had filled his whole being, and swept out of his life all that was not bliss and intoxication; the old tense alertness had returned—the urge that had driven him onward all his life, indefatigably onward, over the whole earth, which humbled itself beneath his feet wherever they trod. Now he remembered that he was the Imperator, the commander; the words of command forced their way to his lips, which were now once more rigid and compressed.

When he left the gates of the royal palace in Alexandria he had in mind a brief absence, after which he would return to his dream and his bliss; but now he knew that the man who returned would not be the man who had ridden away. The magic mountain had closed behind him when he stepped into the open air, and never again would he find the entrance. He had waked out of the divine fairy-tale; the tuba whose metallic clangour had been silenced—for how short a while! —by the tender music of a more beautiful world, now pealed out again in his breast, and drove him out of the blessed peace which he had thought to have won for ever. Now he

must ride and ride—to the unknown bourne whither that nameless power to which he had once for all given himself was bearing him.

A sorrow clutched at his heart, a pain so bitter that there were moments when he wished that he were lying amidst the thousands who had been sacrificed that day, as still and cold as they. When he remembered what was his, and what he must nevertheless relinquish, because destiny required of him the highest sacrifice, the sacrifice of his own happiness, he felt as though he must shriek aloud, and tear his breast with his own hands, in order to benumb the pangs of his soul by the agony of his body. Once more he fought a desperate battle, no less desperate than that which had just been won; once more, in the struggles of his heart, he knew the final renunciation, the recovery, and the supreme effort.

But mightier than the raging of his tortured heart was the more than earthly power of his mission. He was the leader, the pathfinder; arbiter of the fates of millions; he had snatched up the falling standard of the ideal, and it was his to bear it through the darkness of a godless world, followed with joyful cries by those who had faith in him, for the symbol in his hands was at once a promise and fulfilment. That which in another had been comprehensible, and even pardonable, was for him impossible; he could not be untrue to himself; he could not forsake the standard. And this perception of his ultimate purpose was greater than sorrow and suffering, and outshone all egoism with the dazzling radiance of a power and a glory that were born of destiny; it was this perception that won the victory!

Power! That was the great secret of his being.

The profound union with the All which was love's gift to him, the strength of the pinions which were destined to lift him high above humanity: these alone had been powerless without the knowledge that was enclosed in the very depth of his soul—that the stream which flowed through him was a part of the currents which in their totality were life, movement, evolution, striving, achieving. No chance had set him

in this world, but the inscrutably profound plan which lies beneath all the events of history, meaningless as these may appear to men when regarded singly. Love might irradiate the sea of his soul with a golden net of rays of unspeakable beauty; but only power could stir it to the very depths, could lash its waves until they leapt foaming heavenwards. And so it would not merely be shameful to resist; it would be impossible. If he did not cast himself willingly into the storm, if he did not let it bear him onward, he would be torn away by it and become a helpless wreck. The true conqueror is the man who has found the way to reconcile *will* and *must;* for he is forever one with the great harmony.

His human affections attempted one last revolt; the thought of Cleopatra hammered at his heart, and her image rose before him in all its bewitching beauty.

But this time too he was victorious.

No, she would never cease to be for him what she had been —goddess, and beloved, and the utter fulfilment of his desire. But as in an old legend, the temple in which he had prayed to her had been lifted up onto a marble mountain, so high that he could no longer reach it, could only gaze up at it, with his heart full of sweet and torturing memories of the time when he could stride in through the golden portal— happy to think, in his pain, that the best of him was cherished in the precious shrine of the holy of holies: a portion of his being was saved and become immortal, and he cared but little what might happen to the rest.

Save that this remnant did not belong to him, but to the life around him: to Rome—to humanity—to the world.

Within him all was quiet. Somewhere, indeed, something still twitched and quivered; from the inmost chambers of his heart he could hear a faint, broken weeping; but the law that he had given himself was triumphant, and filled him with unearthly greatness and sublimity.

Caesar rode on . . . .

The clear hoof-beats of his horse were almost submerged in the dull tramp of the legions. The shimmering sand of the

desert became an outspread carpet of ruddy gold. On the day that gave him victory over Egypt a still greater victory was won: the victory over earthly things that stood in the way of his loftier destiny. Now, for the first time, when they cheered and acclaimed him after the victory as though he had been a god, he understood how profound was the religious adoration of his soldiers: love felt the presence of love, power was conscious of power, and perceived what the wise could not see, what enemies did not wish to see, and what spineless sycophants must not see: the divine that was in him as it was in all life; the divine, that triumphed over human insufficiency.

Etherealized by the rays of the westering sun, Caesar rode at the head of his troops into a cowed and craven Alexandria, not as the commander of a mere victorious army, but as the godlike leader of the sacred cohorts, the immortal company who fight the high eternal battle for humanity.

FAREWELL

Cleopatra looked up from her profound absorption in her own thoughts.

Her eyes, grown accustomed to the darkness in that long, long night, could perfectly distinguish the various objects in the tapestried chamber. They wandered along the walls, lingered for a moment on the black granite statue of Anubis, before which a votive lamp with a green glass shade was flickering, and returned to that which was dearest to her.

Her dark, stary eyes fastened themselves on the face of the sleeper. With infinite love, the deeper for a dull, slowly rising agony, she considered the beloved face, now relaxed and softened in sleep, in which a faint unrest was beginning to appear, as though the sleeper were conscious of the approach of morning—the last of the many mornings whose coming they had greeted together.

Now it was as though a cloud passed over the relaxed features, hardening and contracting them. The sleeper seemed to be oppressed by a troubled dream. So he had looked when

the fight for the Heptastadion was raging, when the broad white stones were red and slippery with blood; so, when in the last extremity he had leapt from the boat into the sea, in order to save what could be saved; so, when he was marching to the decisive battle at Pelusium.

Battle and strife were over now—and over too were the days and nights of their faery world. The world of every day had resumed possession of him, calling him back with irresistible compulsion. Their grief was vain: the eternal law, mightier than they, was sundering their paths for ever, though they had seemed to be merged into one for time and eternity.

Softly and cautiously she withdrew the hand on which the sleeper's cheek was resting, and laid it against her own cheek. With a stab of pain she felt the warmth of her palm, which was not only her own warmth. Still more hungrily her eyes fastened on the features of the man, as though to make what she saw a part of her very self.

The sleeper moved, sighed deeply, and slowly opened his eyes. They met her own, and gazed into their depths. For a long while they gazed at one another thus, unmoving, and all the energy of despair was in that tenacious gaze. Then, slowly, he raised his arm, to lay it about her neck. But before he had completed the movement she had already sunk down upon him, pressing her lips to his.

Presently, when their embrace had relaxed, he spoke. Once, twice he began, but words failed him; then, in a hoarse, broken voice, half under his breath, as though he feared to break the silence:

"Is it already nearly morning?"

"Yes," she replied as softly. "The stars are fading, and the light is growing in the East."

He said no more, but sighed deeply, and drew her again to himself. For a long while they lay thus: mouth to mouth, body to body, passionately embraced.

It was she who at last released herself. Slowly she put back the arms that held her, and raised herself to look at him.

"You are uneasy," she said quietly.

He could not reply: he shook his head slightly, and raised himself on his elbows, turning his face to hers.

"I am feeling already all the sorrow of the next few hours," he whispered. His face, that on waking had become a carefully controlled mask, was suddenly distorted, afraid and helpless as that of a child. His head fell on her shoulder, and with a shudder she felt the hot tears that fell upon her neck: Caesar, the lord of the world, was weeping.

Her groping fingers found a veil; with her left arm about the beloved head she wiped away the tears that only flowed anew, speaking to him softly as she did so, uttering half unintelligible, half stifled words of endearment, such as a mother may use to quiet a distressed child.

His tears ceased to flow. One deep and lamentable sigh, and he raised his fallen head; and once more it seemed as though a mask of bronze concealed his features—all but the staring eyes, that were full of a wild despair. Slowly he rose to his feet.

"It is nearing the time," he said. His voice was louder now, and it had a metallic ring; this too was a mask, assumed to conceal the grief that still quivered behind it.

She had followed him, and now stood at the foot of the hot, disordered bed which had been their refuge on this last of nights. Her eyes sought in vain to capture his vacant and unseeing gaze.

Then, slowly, he set one foot before the other—without any definite purpose, yet each step led him farther from the couch. She followed him, watching him as though she were observing something of infinite importance, a ceremony which must be remembered in its every detail . . .

She did not approach him. It was as though an invisible wall had already risen between them, making all movement impossible. Shuddering, she felt that her beloved was indeed as far from her as though the width of a continent lay between them.

But at the door, which he had reached all unawares, he

turned about—and then indeed the sundering wall fell for a moment; he held out his hand, and with a stifled cry she went quickly up to him and sank upon his shoulder. So, closely embraced, they passed under the lintel of the doorway. To both of them it seemed as though the massive beam was striving to sink down before them, to hold them back.

And then, suddenly, the full and terrible violence of their grief was upon them. With a broken moan the man pulled the woman towards him, held her body to his with all his strength, pressed his lips to her face, and covered it with burning kisses: kissing her forehead, her eyes, her cheeks. Her mouth sought his like a half-open flower; he pressed his lips into it until his teeth encountered hers; he inhaled her panting breath, seized her lips with his teeth, and bit them fiercely; then, throwing up his head, he uttered a dull moan; only to fall upon her once again. She pressed herself against him as though to penetrate his very being; with her arms convulsively enlacing his shoulders, she returned kiss for kiss, bite for bite, with equal fierceness. She forgot where they stood, what the next moment was to bring; she knew nothing, nothing. A madness had seized them both; that terrible rage which is often born of the supremest passion, that tragic lust to mutilate and destroy the beloved. All humanity had left them; like two contending beasts in deadly combat they clung to one another, surrendering themselves without restraint to the cruel lust of destruction, till all their veins were full to bursting and their very being was surrendered to a monstrous convulsion.

Then, as suddenly as it came upon them, their fury left them. The spell was shattered. His arms fell, and hers relaxed. He took a step backwards and gazed at her. Their eyes were sunken, dull as extinguished fires. He sighed deeply through his clenched teeth, suppressed, with a despairing gesture, the trembling of his limbs, and said three times, in a low, lifeless voice:

"Now I must go! Now I must go! Now I must go!"

She stood immoveable before him, and slowly drooped her

head. A tress of hair slipped down upon her shoulder, and fell, uncurling itself, upon her breast. She grasped it in her fingers, played with it absently, tore at it in despair, and collapsed, with a cry of lamentation, upon the great porphyry table, pressing her forehead against its gold-encrusted edge.

* * * * *

When they met again an hour later it was in the presence of both their retinues. She was once more the queen of Egypt, and he the Roman commander. With polite and deliberate smiles they exchanged polite and deliberate phrases. He thanked her for the hospitality which she had shown him, and she wished him happiness, and the blessing of the gods, upon his subsequent, and assuredly victorious, career. Then he bowed ceremoniously, and without again looking round, left the stately audience-hall, followed by his staff. As on his arrival, the motionless figures of the white-clad priests lined the corridors. Then he had read the ill-concealed anxiety in their eyes; but now their gaze was full of undisguised satisfaction: the intruders were going to the place from which they came; the former rulers of the land would resume their lordship.

* * * * *

The vessel put out from the breakwater, and began slowly to move away from the land. Caesar stood on the after-deck, his hand on the stern rail, taking in for the last time the magnificent picture that offered itself to his gaze. Before him was the bustling, wealthy seaport, dominated by the white, radiant walls of the royal palace that rose from the water's edge. From one of the windows waved a long, white veil, to which Caesar's eyes returned again and again. Was it there . . . ?

He turned away, and his gaze swept over the city. The first attack had come from the theatre on the left. Lake Mareotis, which he had skirted before the last battle, was concealed by the wilderness of houses. Only on the right,

where the buildings were lower and less closely set, an occasional gleam of silver was visible.

The ship moved on. Now they were passing the spot where the Egyptian fleet had perished in the flames—and with it the library, one of the wonders of the world. To the right stretched the endless tongue of the breakwater, where he and his soldiers had almost met their doom. And now the tower of the Pharos appeared; there, surrounded by the all but victorious enemy, he had spent blissful hours with Cleopatra.

Now, as they reached the open sea, the wind swelled the sail. The vessel dipped deep into the foaming crests of the rollers, rising with them, and speeding forward like a steed, rejoicing in its liberty.

Once more Caesar turned has gize towards the royal palace. It was now no more than a little cube amidst an incalculable number of still smaller cubes. The white, waving veil had vanished . . .

MUTINY!

"Proud! What is it, actually, of which you are so proud?"

"Of my descent, my noble blood, the tradition of my house, that gave Rome its first consul."

"That is, of things which are not within your control. You did not choose your parents; rather they gave you a present which you have done nothing to earn. No, Brutus, I have other things of which I am proud!"

Marcus Brutus smiled, coldly and derisively.

"I am curious to learn what they are."

"Such things as these: before Alesia I cut my way into the mêlée and rescued a standard-bearer; when Caesar was before Dyrrhachium I broke through the blockade with troops and provisions; and at Pharsalus I threw back the enemy when they attacked my wing with forces more than three times the strength of my own. These, now, are things of which I am proud!"

Antonius had spoken warmly; now he sank back into his comfortable arm-chair and measured his adversary with

sparkling eyes. Caesar looked on with a smile, observing the two young gamecocks in silence. What would Marcus Brutus reply?

"All that is doubtless very estimable," he retorted, shrugging his shoulders. "But after all, it is not enough that one should *do* a thing; one should know *why* one is doing it."

"That I have always known," interrupted Antonius hastily.

"The convictions and the character of the actor are the principal factors," said Brutus continuing his somewhat didactic sermon without regarding the other's interruption.

"Character!" said Antonius, in derision. "Did you, when you were in the camp of the Senate, examine your character before every battle? I can quite believe it of you—considering how you fought!"

"Quiet, Antonius!" interposed Caesar, suppressing a smile as he admonished the heated young man. "Do not be personal!"

The blood had risen to Brutus' delicate and slightly effeminate face.

"We had no need to examine ourselves," he retorted rather sharply. "Each one of us knew what he was."

"So. And what was each one of you?"

"A republican!"

Antonius made a wry face.

"A big word, and nothing behind it! Republicans! You were republicans because you did not know better, because mutual prejudice and mutual advantage had blinded you to that which to us seems the only thing of importance: personality."

Brutus darted forward like a hunter who sees his quarry walk into the trap.

"Whose personality?" he demanded.

Antonius cast a sly, merry, sidelong glance at Caesar, and laughed delightedly.

"Our own," he said, easily, delighted to feel that he had seen the trap in time to avoid it. "What else did you suppose?"

Brutus did not answer. Two harsh, fanatical furrows ap-

peared on either side of his mouth. He almost resembled Cato as he said, scathingly:

"There is no room for a personality in a well-ordered community: woe to the State in which one citizen overtops the rest!"

"To be sure," agreed Antonius, ironically, "he might remind the others too unkindly of their mediocrity! Oh, Brutus, Brutus! I have always been surprised to see you among Caesar's enemies. Now I am surprised no longer!"

But Brutus answered evasively:

"I was never Caesar's enemy, but only his opponent."

"What is the difference?" asked Antonius, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"That I was far from feeling any personal aversion."

Antonius laughed shortly.

"In other words, the difference is that you were absolutely unnatural; a lifeless puppet, stuffed with phrases, without human feelings or independent thought! I know you and your kind, Brutus! You intoxicate yourselves with phantoms which other brains have hatched for you; you spend your lives on an illusion which someone has palmed off on you, and in your thoughtless narrowmindedness you are ready to sacrifice everything to your so-called ideals—even yourselves, since you consider yourselves of no value. Give me rather the least of Caesar's legionaries! He knows at all events why he is fighting; he has consciously lost himself—like all who are in Caesar's camp—in the one great and overwhelming cause, and if he sacrifices his life he gives it for the one whom he loves!"

Brutus sprang to his feet, biting his lips, a malicious light in his eyes.

"Now I have you!" he cried. "Now you yourself have admitted that for you not the community is all-important, but an individual! There you definitely part company with me and my kind, as you call us!"

Antonius laughed scornfully. In his fierce, bold horse-soldier's face his aversion for his adversary was plainly legible.

"Do you imagine, then," he said, coldly and slowly, "that I have ever desired to be accounted one of you?"

Before Brutus could reply, Caesar's voice rang out: masterful and compulsive.

"Enough! Quarrel where you like, but not before me." His eyes flashed at them. "If I have made my peace with anyone, Antonius, I desire that those about me should respect that peace," he continued, with emphasis. "And you, Brutus, should not forget that those are not the best republicans who have the word forever on their lips." He looked into the two dejected faces, and smiling despite himself, was about to continue in a more conciliatory tone when a servant entered. "What is it?" he asked, with a quick change of tone.

"Sallustius begs to be received," announced the servant. And Sallustius followed on the heels of the slave: dusty, sweating and excited. Caesar looked him over from head to foot, and asked, in astonishment: "You are back from Campania already? What is amiss there?"

Sallustius ground his teeth, drew a long breath, and at last gasped out the words:

"In Campania? Nothing now. See"—and he pointed to a blue patch on his left arm: "they threw stones at me. They shouted that they would deal with no one but you, and since you are not coming to them they intend to reduce the distance for you."

Caesar's brows were deeply wrinkled; in his eyes the lurid fire began to glow which, well as his friends knew it, never failed to startle them.

"What does that mean?" he asked, with unnatural quiet.

"That the whole of the veteran legions are marching against Rome. They ought to arrive this afternoon."

"Good; they shall see me this very day." He stretched himself as he stood up, and his finger touched the gong.

"You mean to go to them?"

"Why not?" And to the slave who entered: "Go at once to the main guard. General alarm! All the gates to be shut and manned. No one—no one—is to be permitted to leave

the city! Quick!" The slave rushed from the room. Sallustius raised imploring hands:

"Caesar! They are utterly out of hand!"

"Because it is a long time since they have had to deal with me."

"They have killed all the officers who opposed their marching on the capital!"

"I will see whether they will finish their murderous work by killing me!"

* * * * *

It was nearly evening.

Early in the afternoon, as Sallustius had foretold, the legions were sighted on the Appian Way. An hour later they began to erect a regular camp, with wall and trenches, on the Campus Martius. And an hour later still the neighborhood of the camp was swarming with traders who had by some unknown means slipped out of the city, and whose intoxicating liquors, which sold readily at usurious prices, robbed the mutineers of their last remnant of sanity; with women who were the offscourings of the Suburra, and furtive rabble from the Trans Tiberim outskirts. In a twinkling the camp was like a vast open-air fair.

Caesar had received a continuous series of reports which kept him fully informed of the situation. He received them with the same rigid countenance with which he had heard Sallustius' first report. Sparing of words, he convinced himself by a long round of inspection that all his instructions had been obeyed, and then ordered his usual white horse to be saddled. And then, with a small escort, he rode out to the rebels' camp.

Even from a distance he could see signs of unbridled licence. The open space before the camp was crowded with soldiers and the riff-raff of the capital. On every hand he saw gambling and drunkenness and the hasty sale of venal love. Outwardly he remained unconcerned; but the disorder which he

was forced to witness hit him hard—harder than the fact of the mutiny itself.

"Here," he heard the scornful voice of Brutus saying behind him, "here you see how your comrades distract themselves."

"Caesar will soon bring them to their senses," snapped Antonius, angrily, gritting his teeth.

Despite the darkness of his mood, Caesar laughed softly.

Yes, he thought. But not as you imagine. He knew of old how to handle his swashbucklers . . .

Now, it seemed, those within the camp had noticed the group of horsemen. There were signs of uneasiness and confusion amidst the noisy throng. The soldiers trooped together, and hurrying messengers disappeared through the gates of the camp.

And suddenly something happened which made the silent, melancholy observer watch more keenly. Here and there centurions ran forward—recognizable by their crested helmets and their staves—and flung up their right hands. Hastily the ranks formed behind them, and in perfect order the legions marched into camp, leaving the rabble to itself.

Caesar drew a deep breath; so they had not quite forgotten their discipline; something of his imperious will remained in them, held them together and restrained them. He gripped his horse more strongly with his thighs; he held the reins with a firmer grasp, and the charger quickened its trot.

Not until he reached the gate of the camp did he pull it into a walk. Slowly, with a stony and impassive face, he rode in through the gate, his eyes fixed on the mutineers, who were drawn up, cohort by cohort, in perfect military order. He looked at them all, and they at him.

He spoke not a word; he did not return the impeccable salute of the legions; he seemed to be wholly unconcerned with his surroundings. But as he was riding past the Tenth Legion those nearest him heard him say to Sallustius: "The Tenth as well?"

At last he had reached the tribune. He sprang from his

horse, threw the reins to one of the loitering horse-boys, and ascended the platform. Stepping forward to the edge of it, he gazed once more at the legions, while a profound silence filled the camp. With both hands on his sword-belt, he began at last, with perfect composure:

"Well, what is it that you really want?"

The soldiers exchanged embarrassed glances; they nudged one another with their elbows, and furtive whispers were exchanged. Three or four came forward at last; hardly of their own free will, for they were pushed to the fore by the rest, and stood looking helplessly about them.

One of them, the most valiant, stammered a few sentences of which only broken phrases were intelligible: ". . . promised over and over again . . . the last battle . . . the promises were never kept . . . we've had enough of it . . ." His voice, none too assured at the outset, died away into unintelligible whispers.

Caesar quietly allowed him to have his say, but his cold eyes never left the speaker's face. Now he made a gesture as though to brush off a troublesome insect, and fixed his gaze on the senior centurion of the Tenth Legion.

"You—you speak!"

The officer stepped forward and once more saluted; and this time Caesar gravely and correctly returned the salute.

"Imperator," he began, "the whole army feels—"

"You mean," Caesar interrupted, "the troops here assembled. They, fortunately, are not the whole army. But go on! It feels—?"

"It feels that all sorts of things have been promised so often; only one more campaign, and then would come a triumph, and peace—and war has always broken out afresh."

"That is not my fault," said Caesar, again interrupting. "If it depended on me—I would sooner make peace today than tomorrow.—Well?"

"Imperator—we are no longer the old legions. Between Bibracte and Pharsalus many formations have been renewed four or five times over. We are only men, and we can't go

on with it. We have hardly recuperated a little in Campania—"

"A year," interjected Caesar.

"—and now we have to be off again to Africa," continued the speaker, disregarding the interruption. "Our bones lie scattered all over the world. There is not one of us but bears the scars of wounds." He was about to shrug his shoulders, but recollected himself in time, and added: "It can't go on."

Caesar considered for a moment. Then, quietly as before, he said:

"In other words, you want your discharge."

"Yes," agreed the centurion. And the word was echoed from the ranks—timidly at first, then louder and louder, until at last a single shout from those countless throats broke upon the tribune:

"Yes!"

Caesar waited for the excitement to abate. Then he spoke, still with perfect composure:

"Well, I can see that your demands have their justification. It is a fact—though it is not my fault—that I have not kept my word, and I must redeem it now. If you really wish for your discharge you shall have it. As for the gifts which I promised you, and the land which I did not indeed promise you, but which I have thought of giving you—as to that you need have no anxiety; but you must have patience until I have finished the campaign with my new troops, and have held the feast of triumph; and in that you, as discharged soldiers, will of course have no share. But immediately afterwards you shall be satisfied. You are, then, discharged—*civilians!*"

"What—?" The centurion, who was still standing before the tribune, gaped with horrified astonishment, and the whole of the legions stood rigid and thunderstruck as he. They had listened to Caesar's speech, first with a feeling of honest shame, and then with increasing dismay. The lash of the whip in the concluding words made them wince. They had not expected this! They had thought that Caesar would beg them,

his comrades, to reconsider their intention, and would buy their final consent with fresh promises. Were they not his soldiers, almost a part of him, his sword, with which he had subdued a continent? And the worst of it was that the greenhorns, who didn't even know what a battle was, would march with him in the triumphant procession, while they, the victors in so many and so terrific battles, they, the crack troops of the army, whose stamping feet had trodden almost every inch of the soil of Spain, Italy, Gaul, Britannia, Illyria and Greece, were to stand by in civilian smocks and look on? That must not be! No! That must not be!

A murmur rose in the ranks; it swelled, sank, and swelled again. The legions no longer stood as on parade. Individual soldiers broke ranks, and made their way to others; the little knots thus formed became groups, and the groups became a crowd, in which excited suggestions and counter-suggestions flew to and fro. All were seeking for some way out of the dilemma, but no one could find it; and the growing excitement of the men found vent in mutual reproaches and curses.

For a few moments Caesar stood motionless. Then he turned on his heel, and prepared to descend from the platform. At this the troops instinctively did the only thing possible: they surged forward, shouting, imploring, pleading with uplifted hands:

"Stop! Stop! Don't go!"

Caesar shrugged his shoulders, and took yet another step. The shouting swelled to a hurricane of sound. At this one of his companions approached him, and made some inaudible proposition. Caesar answered him, making a contemptuous gesture as though to sweep the legions away; but he went no further.

This was at least a momentary result! Already the hastily chosen delegates of all the cohorts were approaching at the double, at their head the senior centurion of the Tenth who had previously spoken in the name of the army. And as the

Imperator had adjourned before, so now his comrades adjured him:

"You—you speak!"

The centurion came forward, hesitating, a lump in his throat.

"Imperator!"

The Imperator wheeled round and looked him haughtily up and down.

"What now? What more do you want? Are you not satisfied?"

"Imperator—" the words were timid and faltering—"we did not mean that—if you still need us—"

"No, I do not need you," said Caesar, mercilessly rejecting the poor, shifty excuse. "I have troops enough: the Fifth Legion, and five recruit legions in Italy and Sicily; two in Egypt, two in Asia Minor, eight in Spain, and one marching hither, as well as garrisons in Illyria, Greece, Syria and Massilia. As you see, I can do without you. But I must confess that I am not sorry to be rid of soldiers who can forget themselves so far after such long service. The only thing I regret is that I should have been mistaken in the Tenth; when I took my bodyguard from among them I little thought that I should see what I have seen today."

From under his heavy helmet the sweat poured down the centurion's face.

"Imperator, we are sorry if we have distressed you. We did not wish to do that—that is the last thing in the world we should have wished to do. If you will—if you are willing, we will leave everything as it was."

But Caesar shook his head.

"No, that is not necessary," he said, lightly. "Grow your cabbages and fill your stomachs; I shall manage without you." Once more he made as though to leave the tribune.

The centurion came a step nearer. He clasped his hands, tore them apart in dismay, and stood stiffly to attention. But his faithful, dog-like eyes implored his master.

"Imperator," he began again, his voice hoarse with excite-

ment: "we have behaved like a lot of mules. Do not be angry with us any more! It is so long since we have seen anything of you that we no longer knew what we were doing. We have behaved shamefully, ungratefully, scandalously—but how could we get on without you? We do not know what will become of us if we are no longer to be your soldiers!"

"Shoemakers — tailors — tanners — peasants — lemonade-sellers"—At every word Caesar descended a step farther.

"Imperator—punish us, as we deserve, but forgive us! We will do anything to atone! We shall no longer be able to look our colors in the face! The Tenth have incurred your displeasure! Decimate us! I will be the first to lay his head on the block! But let us still call ourselves your soldiers!"

"How should I, a commander of troops, punish you civilians?" Now he had reached the ground. He turned abruptly away. The murmuring among the soldiers increased. Civilians! The very word infuriated them!

Hirtius saw the tears in the eyes of the old centurion. He felt sorry for the poor fellow, and said, half under his breath:

"Imperator, have pity on them! They are a stupid lot of cattle—yes; but they really did not know what they were doing. Don't be too hard on them! Only look at them standing there!

Caesar turned slowly round and looked at the centurion. The tears were flowing from his eyes and pouring over his battle-scarred cheeks. The Imperator gazed long into the despairing, disconsolate eyes of the old soldier. Then, changing his tone, speaking harshly and abruptly, and pointing to one of the scars, a slash that ran slanting over the forehead, across the left eyebrow and the nose, to the right-hand corner of the mouth, and he asked: "Where did you get that?"

The centurion felt a wave of terror go scalding down his spine. Ye gods, he knew that beginning! Now would come a set speech, so peppery that one would rather have faced a Gallic attack, a German storming-party! But the next

moment a wild hope sprang up in his heart. Caesar was thundering at them all! That meant that he still regarded them as his soldiers! Between fear and jubilation, he answered, smartly:

"In the Rhine valley."

"So! And this?" Caesar's fingers were playing with the medals and chains of honor with which the centurion's cuirass was covered. "And this? And this?"

"On the Sabis.—In Britannia.—At Alesia." He could hardly keep up with Caesar. Squinting down at his decorations without altering his position, he ejaculated, more and more hastily: "At Uxellodonum.—At Dyrrhachium.—At Pharsalus." The whole campaign was unfolded as he named the little golden plaques and chains.

Caesar retreated half a pace, stood there with his arms akimbo, and fixed him with his flashing eyes.

"A fine thing this!" he said, cuttingly. "An officer decorated ten times over, an officer of a so-called crack legion, in an affair of this sort! Man, what ever were you thinking of? Nothing, as usual, eh? One has only to leave you to yourself for a few days, and you are capable of any folly! What do you want with me as a commander? Go back to Gaul and get some cretin from the Alps; you would be worthy of him!" He had raised his voice as he was speaking, and now it rang through the whole camp. He turned his gaze from the centurion, and fastened it on the man's neighbor, a maniple-leader of the Sixth Legion. Under his deep tan the man turned pale.

"Look how the man stands!" hissed Caesar. "Is that a military bearing? I will show you what it means to be a soldier! I will gruel you until the blood spurts from under your finger-nails! You would mutiny, would you? Ah, you wait!" His glance travelled further, and swept over the legions, who had silently reformed their ranks as soon as they heard the storm breaking. "And you over there!" he shouted. "Look at that—look at it! Is that supposed to be military discipline?" He pointed to a cohort whose ranks

were as straight as though a cord had been stretched across their shins. "Serpentine lines and curves that the most learned mathematician couldn't describe, and a way of holding yourselves that makes me sorry for you!" He stopped to take breath. "Tell me, what is all that supposed to be?" And since no answer followed, he thundered at the unhappy centurion: "I am asking what that undisciplined mob of niggers before me is supposed to be?"

The man addressed gasped for breath.

"The Eighth Veteran Legion, Imperator," he stammered at last.

"The Eighth Veteran Legion?" shouted Caesar. "The Eighth Veteran's Club, I suppose you mean! If you were to pull yourself together a little you might trot behind the corpse at a funeral: you are no good for anything else!" He snorted angrily. Then the famous vertical furrow shot up between his eyebrows, and he spoke in a sharp, impersonal tone:

"Until further notice all troops are under arrest in camp. The senior centurions of the various legions will submit a list of fatigues to me every morning, and this must be strictly adhered to. I will soon have the lust drilled out of your bones! In a fortnight's time I shall come and see whether military discipline still has any meaning for you. Then it will be time to consider. . ." He turned sharply away, beckoned for his horse, and swung himself into the saddle. Without another glance at the abashed legions, he prepared to leave the camp.

Then the centurion of the Tenth stepped forward again, and looked up at him with anxious, imploring eyes, in which a timid hope was kindling. Caesar looked down at the man with a cold, hard gaze.

"What is it now?" he asked abruptly.

"And now—" the centurion began incoherently, "and now—are we your soldiers again? Imperator? Are we your soldiers again?"

Caesar continued to look down at him. His eyes were still

stormy, but his lips were twitching. He struck his heels into his horse's flanks.

"Hades take you!" he cried roughly as he rode away. "Yes!"

THAPSUS

"FOURTEENTH Legion: own losses three killed, thirty-one wounded; losses of the enemy on this section of the front, three thousand two hundred."

In a voice that trembled with delight Hirtius read the written report of the commandant of the legion, entered the figures, and commented: "That is a total enemy loss of nearly twenty-two thousand men. So far we have only twenty killed, and a hundred and twenty-five wounded." His listener made no answer. With wrinkled brow he strode up and down the tent, staring fixedly at the ground.

So it had been for hours, ever since the hideous carnage had ceased. In profound silence the Imperator had ridden back from the bloody battlefield, had leapt from his sweating horse, and had disappeared into his tent, whither Hirtius alone might follow him. Since then he had paced to and fro, incessantly to and fro, with heavily clouded brows, which all but hid his gloomy eyes.

The war was at an end. Nothing was left of the Senate's forces but mere scant remnants, incapable of forming the basis of a new army. The enemy had gained nothing by their alliance with the Numidians, nor by the chain of coastal fortresses which were to cut Caesar off from Italy, nor by the phalanxes of war-elephants which had been their chief offensive weapon, nor by their crushing numerical superiority, which should have enabled them to sweep Caesar and his legions into the sea; the master of strategy had enticed the whole stupendous array on to a battlefield which made it impossible for them to deploy, so that they surged helplessly to and fro, while he shattered and crushed and destroyed them.

He? No. It was the troops themselves, and above all the

Tenth, who had against his will forced the beginning of the battle; and with them all the rest, the old, blood-thirsty legions; they had been like panting bloodhounds straining at the leash; there was no holding them, and they determined, over his head, and against his express orders, to end all at one blow; to shatter, once and for all, this constantly rallying enemy, in order that they might at last lay aside their dripping swords.

That moment—that one moment when he heard the legion's buglers sound the attack, the signal which he had not—as yet—ordered!

That he, *he* should have been forced to ride after the charging legions in order to overtake them before they had reached the enemy, in order to reach in time the place which was rightly his: at the head of his troops!

His troops! Were they there still his troops? Was not the sword which he had forged in these endless years of war now stronger than himself? Had it not wrested itself from his hand, in order to slay and destroy on its own accord? The Tenth, whom he had once called "his" legion, had caught up the signal; not one had remained behind; all had rushed forward, outwardly disciplined, but inwardly possessed by only one thought, one emotion, which was not his own: to kill, to kill!

Fresh orderlies arrived with further reports. Quickly Hirtius brought them in.

"Eleventh Legion: three killed, twenty wounded; enemy losses three thousand eight hundred men. Fifth Legion: twelve killed, seventy-three wounded; enemy losses, eleven thousand five hundred men."

Caesar suddenly stopped his pacing to and fro.

"How many is that altogether?"

Hirtius sighed with relief: the silence was broken! He made a quick reckoning, and said, with eager haste:

"Our losses: thirty-five killed, two-hundred and eighteen wounded: enemy losses, thirty-seven thousand killed." Ex-

pectantly he looked at Caesar, bending forward to receive the next question.

But no question followed. Caesar had relapsed into silence, had resumed his pacing to and fro. The thoughts were surging through his brain.

Thirty-five killed, and the enemy had lost thirty-seven thousand. Each death in his own ranks was repaid more than a thousand-fold; for each mortal wound more than a thousand gaping wounds in the bodies of his fallen enemies. This was a carnage without parallel; an endless torrent of life-blood, staining the desert sands with its dark crimson.

With an involuntary movement Caesar grasped his left wrist with the fingers of his right hand. With something like horror he felt his pulse. He reflected that on this bloody day he was perhaps the only man who had not lost a drop of red blood; his body was perhaps the only one to bear no wound, and his mouth alone was unwrithen with pain.

All the more poignantly he was conscious, now, of all the death-agonies that had rent so many hearts this day; now, in his own heart, he heard all the shrieks and groans and death-rattles as one terrible, shrieking outcry; his shoulders, which had once seemed strong enough to bear a world, were bowed beneath the burden of this terrible responsibility—the responsibility for so many sacrificed, extinguished lives.

Aims! Plans! Intentions! . . . Had he still aims and plans and intentions? Was it still as it was once, when he entered upon the path that had led irresistibly onward, from small beginnings to the monstrous events of today? Was he still seeking to build up the new world of which he had dreamed as a boy, and whose creation alone could justify the total destruction of the old? Had he not rather come to perceive that he could not give this world to others, because each must build it up in his own heart, as he himself had done? Had not the unforgettable days in Alexandria revealed to him the only true life—the life of the heart?

With unspeakable horror he felt that the sacrifices of this day had been in vain, that blood had been shed in vain, as

all blood is shed in vain that is not poured out in love; that hate can only kill and destroy; that love alone can uplift, and give, and inspire, and illumine. . .

The curtain of the tent was lifted; the report of the Tenth Legion was still lacking; now a centurion brought it, an evil, triumphant light in his green, tigerish eyes. His uniform was in tatters, his right arm lay in a sling, and a thick bandage covered half his swollen mouth. Hissingly, and barely intelligible, the words burst from the purple bloated lips:

"Tenth Legion: our losses, fifteen killed, eighty-seven wounded; enemy losses, thirteen thousand killed."

With a leap Caesar stood before him, his eyes staring, his fists raised as though to strike or to curse. From his tortured breast a single word escaped:

"Murderer!" he shouted.

BEFORE THE TRIUMPH

THE last visitors had left the hall; turning round at the doorway, and bowing their proud heads, now at last subdued, to the ground. Caesar was alone.

So long as even the tip of a flowing toga was visible he had maintained the attitude of dignified reserve which he had assumed while dismissing the departing visitors. Now he slowly turned on his heel, and passing the sunken pool, went into his workroom. On the walls were the busts of his ancestors, gazing down, with their dead, unwinking eyes, on this descendant of theirs, who had so far outstripped them all. The grave, austere features of the victor of Acerrae, and the merry, vivacious face of his brother—both of them victims of the senile madness of Marius—were gleaming in the last slanting ray of sunshine which had crept in through the rectangular lantern. The tired, suffering face of his father lay in deepest shadow.

For a moment Caesar stood reflecting. How often had he imagined the hour which he had just known; during his lonely, laborious nights, in the midst of the popular assembly, or the Senate, and in the camps of half a continent; the hour

when the last opposition should be broken, the hour when he should be master. Now that hour had come—and he found that it differed in no wise from the countless other hours of his life; except that he was more than ever conscious of the urge which had driven him forward all his life; and that almost terrifying feeling that he had no time, that he must work until he fell exhausted, in order to accomplish at least some part of that for which he had spent half his life on the battle-field.

He quickened the pace, for every moment which he gave to superfluous rest was lost eternally.

In his workroom it was already twilight. He sent for lamps, and sat down at his writing-table, concentrating his attention instantly on one of the many bundles of documents which covered its polished surface.

At the footsteps of the slave who entered, soft though they were, he looked up.

"Is he there?" he asked. And as the slave bowed assent; "They are to bring him in here," he said.

The slave slipped out of the room. Caesar leant back in his chair, fixing his eyes on the gently-swinging curtain.

A faint clanking sound was audible, momently approaching, accompanied by the sound of men marching in step. The curtain was lifted, and two legionaries entered, who placed themselves one before each doorpost. Then a tall, broad-shouldered man with steel fetters on his wrists came heavily into the room. Behind him were two more legionaries, who immediately stationed themselves on either side of their prisoner. Lastly a centurion appeared, who stood to attention and reported, in a curt, military tone:

"Order executed."

Caesar looked at the fettered man, who stood before him composedly. His expression was gloomy but imperturbable. His abundant, chestnut-brown hair was combed back from his forehead; his finely-chiselled mouth was shadowed by a long, drooping moustache, while his cheeks and chin were carefully shaven. It seemed that he had already been attired

for the morrow's triumph; his clothing was evidence of the fact, and his general equipment, which was that of a noble Gaul, and the light fetters which he wore in place of the heavy chains of an ordinary prisoner.

Without taking his eyes off the prisoner, Caesar ordered: "Take the fetters off him."

The centurion went up to the Gaul, and with some little trouble opened the manacles. The prisoner's arms fell to his sides, as though they were something alien, which did not belong to him. Caesar continued:

"Leave us alone."

Once more the centurion stood to attention and saluted, and muttered a few words of command to his men, who turned and left the room. Again the faint clanking and the rhythmical steps were audible for a little while; then they suddenly ceased; the escort had halted in the hall; the men were waiting there, in order to be at hand if the Imperator should need them.

Caesar was still silent. His eyes travelled over the sinewy but now terribly emaciated body of the man before him, and returned to the proud, clear-cut face, which in its immobility was like a pale mask. Only the eyes were alight under the thick eyebrows.

At last Caesar opened his lips.

"It is a long time since our last meeting," he said, in the fluent Gallic which he had acquired in his seven years of transalpine warfare.

The prisoner raised his head, but made no answer.

"It was, I believe, at Alesia," continued Caesar.

The prisoner's head sank again. There was a long silence. When Caesar spoke again his voice was quiet and almost friendly:

"Will you not answer me, Vercingetorix?"

The gloomy, smouldering eyes met the Imperator's gaze.

"What should I answer?" said the Gaul, heavily. "Am I once more to admit the fact of your victory? . . . Yes, it was at Alesia."

"No, Vercingetorix," said Caesar, quietly correcting him. "If I had wanted nothing else of you it would have been simpler to speak with you on the occasion of tomorrow's triumph, before the procession starts. I had another reason for sending for you now." And with a sudden change of tone, he said, frankly: "I have something to say to you."

Something like faint surprise stirred the impassive features.

"You have something to say to me?" said Vercingetorix, slowly. Then his face resumed its mask-like aspect. "Speak. I am listening."

Caesar continued to gaze at the Gaul, drumming on the palm of his left hand with a stylus which he had picked up from the table. He seemed to be reflecting. Then he threw the stylus back on to the table, laid his hands on the arms of his chair, and began, in a tone whose dryness was intentional:

"Vercingetorix, you have been five years a prisoner, and you can hardly know what has happened in these five years. I will therefore tell you, briefly: Gaul is finally conquered, and incapable of further rebellion. But even if rebellion were attempted, your party of liberation has yet fewer prospects of success than it had in your time, since I have profited by these five years to establish my power. An insurgent Gaul would today have to encounter not twelve or thirteen legions, but fifty or sixty. I am the master in Rome, and man enough to make adequate use of my mastery." He raised his voice somewhat as he spoke the last sentence, emphasizing each word with a blow of his open hand on the arm of his chair. From the hall without a faint clanking was heard, as though in confirmation of Caesar's words.

Unwaveringly the Gaul returned the Imperator's glance. Not a muscle quivered in the pale mask, to which the carefully-tended hair and moustache gave a quality at once grotesque and tragic, and Caesar continued as quietly as he had begun:

"A country in which so terrible a war has raged for eight long years must needs have suffered grievous wounds. It was therefore one of my first duties to provide for the healing

of these wounds. I think I have largely succeeded; the fields are again fully sown, the towns destroyed by fire are to a great extent rebuilt, the network of roads has been repaired, and an active trade provides for the import of necessaries—in short, Gaul is in a good way to recover from her bad years." He leaned back, cleared his throat, took a sip of the honey-sweetened water that stood on the table, and continued:

"But these are all merely beginnings. As Gaul is now I cannot leave it to itself. This great country must be welded together into a single community, which will take its place without friction in the general organism of the empire." The last words were again accompanied by a sharp beat of the speaker's hand on the arm of his chair.

"But in order to realize this plan I need men who know the country. I cannot do with any chance praetor who would ruin the province by the usual tricks of the trained administrator." (And enrich himself in doing so, he added mentally.) "I must send men into Gaul who would put their heart into the work—men who know the inhabitants, and who, above all, will enjoy the confidence of the people. But there is a lack of such men. Such as there were, some of them have fallen, while others, as far as I am concerned, have ceased to exist."—For a moment he thought of Titus Labienus, now somewhere in Spain with the last remnant of the Pompeians. The harsh, vertical furrows appeared in his worn face, and vanished again. A bright, almost child-like smile made him, for a moment, look singularly boyish. He glanced up at the motionless Gaul.

The deep-set eyes of his prisoner fastened on his own. Caesar rose, with a quick, supple movement, and went up to him. "No more evasions, Vercingetorix," he said. "I have learned to know you and to value you." His eyes travelled up the towering figure before him. "You are a man. Will you undertake the office of which I have spoken?"

The Gaul answered by a fixed stare. Caesar left him no time for reflection.

"Naturally," he continued, as before, in a deliberately dry and impersonal tone, "I shall have to send a Roman official with you. The Senate will put up with a good deal from me—" and once more the boyish smile appeared—"but there are things which it will not stand. But I have managed so to arrange matters that no one can interfere with your work: you will be responsible, and subordinate, to me alone—and you may be sure that I, with my knowledge of Gaul, shall always take your side in any dispute."

He stepped back, trying to read what lay in the Gaul's eyes, to pierce the veil that had once more fallen over them.

"It is for you, Vercingetorix, to decide your future destiny," he concluded, in a casual, impersonal tone, which was intended to conceal his inward tension. "I have had your fetters removed; say the word, and you shall never wear them again; say the word, and tomorrow, when you walk in the triumphal procession, it will be not among the prisoners, but among the friends of Caesar. There is a room in my house made ready for you, even as my heart is ready—" and now there was something like warmth in the cool voice—"to forget the past, and to see only the good that is in you, your brilliant qualities of mind and heart—and to think only of our common labor for the welfare of the country that we both love.—Now speak, Vercingetorix." He felt behind him for his chair, and was about to resume his seat.

"No!" The word was hurled at him as from a catapult.

He looked up. The Gaul's eyes, opened to their widest extent, were ablaze with fury. The powerful muscles of his jaws were quivering, and his finely-chiselled lips twitching as though suppressing unuttered words.

Now it was Caesar's face that assumed an impenetrable mask. With a quiet movement he drew the arm-chair towards him and lowered himself into it.

"So it is no," he said quietly. "May one know the reason?" And since he did not at once receive an answer, he insisted, in the impatient tone of an offended sovereign: "Well?"

Vercingetorix was trembling from head to foot with sup-

pressed fury. His eyes blinked rapidly, and he stammered as he spoke.

"You suggest that I—I, who led all Gaul against you, I, who was the last hope of a poor, betrayed people—you suggest that I should help you to complete the enslavement of this people? Could you for a moment suppose that I should agree? Never! Do you hear? Never, never! You can put me in chains, you can throw me into prison—you can lead me out tomorrow, in your triumphal procession, like a beast to the sacrifice, and then kill me—but you can never persuade me to do anything so base, so mean, so shameful and dishonorable as to help you in your work!"

He fell silent, pressing his finger-nails into his palms, while his breath panted from his convulsively heaving breast.

Caesar had let him have his say without interrupting him; a third person might almost have supposed that he had not been listening. Now he said, slowly and quietly as before:

"These are hard words, Vercingetorix. Anger makes you unjust."

"Unjust!" The Gaul laughed scornfully through his grinding teeth. "As though it were possible to be unjust to the robber of Gallic liberty!"

Caesar ignored the calumny.

"The history of Gaul shows," he said, with unaltered composure, "how much it has been concerned with Gallic liberty: the Arverni fell upon the Aedui, and then upon the Sequani, and the consequence was that every Gaul considered that he had the right to kill any other Gaul. If you call that Gallic liberty—at all events I have put an end to that."

"Under my leadership the whole Gallic nation was united!"

"Yes; and if fate had so willed it that you had been victorious, in six months' time you would have been fighting amongst yourselves like so many mad dogs."

"These were battles for the supremacy in Gaul itself, which did not concern you Romans."

"Do you think so?" In Caesar's tone there was something like derision. "You have a bad memory, Vercingetorix, or

you would recollect that the Aedui called me into the country after the Sequani had called in Ariovist to help them."

"But when you had conquered Ariovist you remained!"

"Yes: what else did you imagine I should do?" Caesar had picked up the stylus again; now he threw it angrily on to the table. "You are incorrigible dreamers, you Gauls! Do you understand that blood had been shed, Roman blood, in Gaul and for Gaul? Did you think I should withdraw on receiving the thanks of the Gallic nation—reconciled for the moment only—contented with the consciousness of having done a good deed?" He leapt to his feet, and paced to and fro as his habit was. Then, halting before Vercingetorix, he continued, in a tone of conviction: "Vercingetorix, use your reason! Forget, for once, your fantastic way of looking at the matter, and take a sober, calculating, I might almost say a businesslike view: When you asked me to help you against the Germani you must have known perfectly well that you were contracting a debt. Can you wonder, then, that I presented the bill when it fell due? And that in the absence of guarantees"—and he smiled faintly—"I took pledges?"

"Be silent!" The Gaul shook his fists in Caesar's face. "How can you speak of a disinherited people as though it were an object of barter?"

Caesar was undismayed by the threatening gesture.

"Indeed!" he said, scathingly. "You mean to say, that I have disinherited the Gallic people? And you great lords, who plundered the country and sucked it dry? For whom three-fourths of the population drudged and toiled, so that you could lead a comfortable, idle existence? I will tell you something, King of the Arverni! I did not disinherit the people—I set it free! Into the rotting morass of your degenerate semi-civilization I let the fresh air without which the Gallic nation must have stifled! That I had to do the thing thoroughly, that the Gallic nation, within a hundred years, will have been entirely absorbed in the great Roman nation, is the fault of you noble lords, with your arrogance and con-

ceit, and your incorrigible lust of power, to which the whole nation had to be sacrificed!"

Now he had really talked himself into a rage, and he hurried to and fro, with short, vigorous steps, his hands behind his back, disregarding the motionless Gaul.

Vercingetorix waited. The fire in his eyes was extinguished: they stared gloomily from under the heavy eyebrows. After a while, as Caesar was still silent, Vercingetorix asked, in his hoarse, veiled voice:

"Have you anything else to say to me?"

Caesar stood still.

"No," he replied, with faint contempt. "I have nothing more to say to you. We have done with one another." He went to the doorway. With his hand still on the folds of the curtain, he stopped. "Yes, there is something more. The king of the Atrebantes has concluded peace with me. He is sulking, of course, but that does not matter so long as he keeps the peace. What would you do if after the triumph I set you free to return to Gaul?"

In Vercingetorix' eyes the fanatical fire flashed out again.

"I should not rest," he cried, passionately, "until all Gaul, from the Belgi to the Allobroges, was once more in arms against you!"

With a decisive gesture Caesar tore the curtain aside.

"Guard!"

And turning to the prisoner, while the clank of the approaching escort was already audible, he said, in a dry, harsh voice:

"Then you die tomorrow."

IO TRIUMPE!

TRIUMPH, Caesar!

Thine enemies are all laid low, stricken down by thy mighty hand. In twelve years of superhuman strife thou hast defeated army upon army, conquered city upon city, defeated enemy upon enemy. Thy charger has carried thee through three continents, from the extremest frontiers of the

West to the scorching banks of the Nile, from the gliding eddies of the Rhine to the Numidian desert. Three continents have seen the eagles of thy legions, have heard the trumpets braying forth the news of thy victories. Now thou art lord of all, the omnipotent, unrestricted ruler, to whose commands the whole world gives ear. Triumph, Caesar!

Along the route hallowed by ancestral tradition the stupendous procession winds onward. Already its head has reached the foot of the Capitol, and its rear has not even entered the beginning of the Via Sacra. Gold and gems glitter from the innumerable precious trophies; the statues of the river-gods sway above the heads of their bearers; brightly shine the rod-encircled axes of the seventy-two lictors who march before the Triumphator; the four highbred snow-white horses draw his triumphal car and move with a nervous, trampling gait; and then, in serried ranks, marching sixteen abreast, and filling almost the whole width of the road, comes the bronze serpent of the conquerable legions who have fought Caesar's campaigns, survived Caesar's battles, and won Caesar's victories; the Tenth leading, the Fourteenth bringing up the rear: scarred brown faces, keen, fiercely-flashing eyes, breasts covered with decorations, helmets crowned with wreaths of laurel, or oak, or even golden leaves. And on either side the monstrous crowd of spectators, the entire population of the vast city, celebrating the day of triumph by an unparalled orgy.

Caesar's face is the one grave, indifferent face among all these millions, radiant with the splendor of the day. His grey eyes, whose clear gaze, all through the years, has infallibly foreseen the intoxication of this feast, are veiled, and a little weary of the glitter of gold, the feast of color, the waving of flags and kerchiefs. From time to time he turns his head to this side or that, and gazes through the gaps in the moving wall of twenty elephants that flanks his car, into the countless eyes that are beaming upon him; but his own sweep heedlessly over the close-packed faces. His lips are immovable, neither compressed nor relaxed; it is as though he

were a stranger, without part in the joyful tumult, without understanding of it, wholly unrelated to it.

He has no joy of the festival; nor was there joy in his heart yesterday, in the hour of complete victory. The final fulfilment has extinguished his joy in the task. Why are the people so intoxicated? Because to them the victory was unexpected. For him nothing is left but the weariness of the man who has done his day's work.

Gold and gems, lights and colors, many-hued tapestries hanging from balconies and windows, flowers that fall in a continual shower, raining upon him and covering the ground until his horses are fetlock-high in the fragrant carpet; the incessant and jubilant shouting of the crowds, the thundering songs of triumph of the legions—all these things are the over-costly, over-splendid frame of a picture that is lacking. He surrenders himself to the pomp of the triumph as to a ceremonial duty which must be fulfilled, because this ostentation and pageantry impress the masses, and incline them to submit themselves to the rule of the princes of this world; but in his heart he is far, far away; so far that he was no farther when he fought the British barbarians on the banks of the Tamesis, or when he pillowed his head, hot and weary with thought, in the cool lap of Cleopatra.

At the thought of his lost love the rigidity of his immobile features relaxes for a moment. He remembers the blissful hours on the royal barge, under the rose and purple canopy, and the nights of passion, when their hearts caught fire and were merged in one another. Perhaps he too would have felt the joy and jubilation of the triumph had she been beside him to share in the scene of victory; but now his hopeless longing embitters all other feelings, intensifies the utter loneliness which is his lot, and makes it doubly painful.

For he is lonely, terribly lonely—despite the adoring eyes of Hirtius, Pollio and Antonius, who are walking beside his car; despite the passionate devotion of every man of his legionaries; despite the unending applause of the crowd—despite the estranged wife who waits at home for his return.

Lonely as he always was—except for a few months which are irrevocably past and gone.

Gone? No: for something of them still persists in him, something that cannot be extinguished; it is not simply a memory, not merely the thought of happiness enjoyed: but something indefinable remains, which, divorced from past experience, lives its own immortal life, giving value and purpose to his own, and uplifting it above the personal and human. And as he discovers this something, this knowledge which was for the first time fully revealed to him when he returned from Pelusium to Alexandria, he feels once more what he felt when Cleopatra's arms were twined about him: he is conscious of that profound union with all existing things, which makes him brother to stones and plants and animals and men: that oneness with the All.—And at this moment the procession stops.

Roused from his meditations, he returns to the present moment. The prisoners, the chief trophies of the pageant, are being led away to meet their sorry fate. Caesar's eyes wander past Arsinoë, Cleopatra's sister and enemy, past the powerful figures of German, British, Gallic and Spanish chieftains, pale with long imprisonment, past the docile faces of Egyptian nobles and Numidian horsemen, and come to rest on the noble head of Vercingetorix.

The features of the young king of the Arverni have lost the hard defiance of yesterday. In infinite majesty, disregarding the crowd that surges about him, the prisoner of Alesia, the victor of Gergovia, gazes into the remote unknown. So lofty, so full of power is this gaze that the guards look like slaves beside him, and the executioner, who stands behind him, seems to be awaiting his orders. It is almost as though he were the hero of the triumph, and not its victim.

Caesar cannot turn his eyes from this transfigured face. His attendants wait for a sign; at that sign the car will move on again; but he does not stir. Profoundly moved, he gazes

at the king, and he feels that in all this vast crowd there is no one so near to him as this, his greatest enemy.

From the depths of his soul Caesar wishes that Vercingetorix would understand him, would answer him with his eyes; for then, in spite of all, he would step from his triumphal car, and loose the fetters with his own hands, and throw his arms about the rigid, upright neck, and draw down the proud and lofty head, and press the kiss of brotherhood upon his cheek.

But the other's eyes do not meet his own. Vercingetorix is looking past him and over him. And in the great, wide eyes, which yesterday were blazing with wrath, is a light, a radiance, which is not of this world. The king of the Arverni is the victor over all, even over Caesar, for his is the victory over life. He who looks into this face knows that this man is longing for the death which awaits him within the hour; that he is longing for it as a bridegroom for his bride, that he will fling himself upon this death rejoicing, will clasp it in the mighty arms that so strongly shook Caesar's power, and surrender himself to it with passion: for him this death is the door that leads to eternal freedom.

A cold hand grips at Caesar's heart. His softened mood evaporates; sober recognition and weariness return; and with them the disconsolate sense of infinite loneliness, which the thought of Cleopatra and the sight of Vercingetorix had banished for a while.

With one last, long look he takes his farewell of the tall figure of the Gallic hero. Then, with a slow, lifeless gesture, he gives the sign to re-start the procession.

RECOGNITION

And now to work!

The path was free; all resistance was broken, and to the frontiers of the Roman empire all awaited Caesar's commands. With the sword he had ploughed the endless acres; with blood he had fertilized them. The soil was prepared, and waiting for the seed.

But the sower hesitated.

Why? Was there anything still to do before the great work of creation was begun? Did the great master of human destiny feel that the time was not yet ripe? But was he not telling himself that every day of postponement was a day lost, that he had no other desire than at last, at last to be able to set to work?

Over and over again it had seemed as though he was about to begin. For example, when he summoned the Egyptian astronomers to Rome, that they might reform the calendar; when he promulgated the great Italian rural constitution, which regulated the civic life of the peninsula to the smallest details; when he set an insuperable barrier to the greed of the financial sharks; when he abolished the old evil of State pensioners, and secret societies, and the rule of the Roman mob; when he settled eighty thousand of his veterans in Gaul, in order to colonize and Romanize the country; when he bestowed full civic rights on his beloved Transpadana; when he summoned the worthiest and most respected representatives of all the colonies to the Senate, making this body truly representative of the empire. Innumerable reforms, great and small, had spread like a cleansing torrent over the empire, sweeping away all that was old and outworn, inspiring and fructifying new hopes and new promises.

But life remained what it was; it followed its old tracks. Perhaps it was securer and more confident than of old, but fundamentally it was the same; men's sorrows were the same, and their joys the same; the stormy breath of the next age that was to change all things was lacking; the great revaluation of all values had not taken place. The man who was to have effected it, whose only aim in life it had once been, was more vividly aware of this than anyone. In weeks of profound solitude, during which no one was permitted to disturb him, in sleepless nights without end, he strove to grasp the thing that eluded him; he sought for the key, the magic formula, which should unlock the treasures amassed in the long decades, and which were now hidden in the inmost

recesses of his being. And he knew that it was impossible that he should find it; what he had believed to be his inalienable possession was gone for ever.

Now, therefore, since all depended on his will alone, that question confronted him and threatened him which he had asked himself so often during the last few years: What did he really wish?

To restore order, he had once told the ageing Sulla. The order that had then hovered before his eyes, the final and absolute order, which should abolish even the last traces of chaos, dissolving them in the cosmos, the great harmony. He had hoped to create the new world, that ideal world which hovered before the immortal gods when they evoked this imperfect world from chaos. He had wanted to lift himself high above the accidental, to perfect what was as yet uncontrolled and instinctive, to gather together what was as yet dispersed and hostile, to build the house whose stones lay scattered upon hallowed ground, by him to be hallowed.

And now he perceived that he had willed the impossible; that incompleteness, impulsiveness and strife were fundamental laws of the universe, without which all life would be petrified; that for him there could be no sowing, for the grain in his hands was sterile; that he would not create, but destroy; he would not give life, but kill.

And he perceived further: that he who deprives mankind of its inmost self is its enemy: that it is precisely to the noblest that compulsion, however beneficent it may seem, is the worst of all tortures; that the accomplishment of his task would drive out of the world the very thing by which it lived: freedom.

And he perceived, lastly, what he had dimly felt in Cleopatra's arms, what he had first clearly realized on the bloody day of Thapsus—but now he perceived it with the sober, appraising mind which unerringly sifts truth from falsehood: namely, that no order, no edict, no expression of will, however vehement, can help and uplift and enlighten humanity; that there is no such thing as humanity, as a general con-

ception; there is only the individual man, and the individual man is—myself, and you. But even this individual man could not be helped unless he helped himself.

For even if he could tear the heart from his breast and show to one and all the world that which he had built within it, and which had so little in common with the earthly world —even then the children of this world, wholly enmeshed in the life of the senses, would gaze at him with eyes that saw not, and give ear to him with ears that heard not; would deride the dreamer and enthusiast, and reject even the few treasures that he could offer them. His sacrfiice would be in vain, and he would die with the conviction that he had lived in vain.

So he must hold his peace, even though he saw salvation. Innumerable paths led thither, but each must find his own; the most he could do was to pour a healing balm into the festering sores that he saw on every hand; to bring a little ease into the outward life of mankind, hoping that in the peace of every-day life the higher life might be called into being in a few noble hearts; he could not lead, he could only show the way; he could not prepare the road, he could only remove a few of the obstacles that encumbered the track.

And feel that he—he alone—had reached the goal.

TWO MEN

The secretary in the ante-room pricked up his ears at the vibrating note of the gong. He hurried into the workroom, waving the long list of audiences to be given.

Caesar took the list with a nervous, impatient hand, and ran his eyes quickly down the columns.

"Cicero," said the tired, harassed voice.

The secretary hurried out, and admitted the old Consul. Under his snow-white hair his eyes twinkled craftily in his round, wholesomely-colored face. The mouth was that of a man who enjoyed life, though for the moment the lips were protruded in a sulky pout.

With a curt inclination of his head Caesar answered the

formal greeting of his visitor, and pointed to a chair. Ceremoniously, and clearing his throat in an embarrassed fashion, the man who had overcome Catilina took a seat.

"What brings you to me?" The words were intended to be courteous, but they were spoken brusquely, almost harshly. Caesar had no time now for politeness.

An ingratiating gesture from Cicero.

"In the first place, the desire to inquire after your health. I heard that you were unwell."

An abrupt wave of the hand, contrasting strangely with the gracefully-rounded gestures of Cicero.

"I do not think my health is an especially interesting subject." The keen eyes, which had grown paler with increasing age, looked into the twinkling eyes of the visitor, "Without circumlocution, Cicero."

The some-time consul twisted his lips as though he had bitten a sour fruit, and his eyes avoided the keen gaze that rested on him. Hesitatingly he began:

"The weather has been very fine these last few weeks."

Caesar's hand began to drum on the arm of his chair. Cicero hastened to continue:

"So I spent some little time in Tusculum. I returned to Rome early this morning."

"Well?" The tone was curt and harsh. Caesar knew well enough what was coming.

"Yesterday there was a session of the Senate."

"To be sure."

"An exceptionally important agenda. So far as I have been informed, the proposal that State officials should be appointed by the Dictator was put to the vote."

"The lex de partitione comitiorum. What else?"

"It was unanimously adopted."

Caesar threw himself back in his chair so violently that the wood cracked; the gradual, furtive tactics of his visitor exasperated him.

"Yes, yes!" he cried. "What else?"

"My name is inscribed on the list of those who voted for the measure—although I was not present."

"Well?"

The twinkling eyes began to stare. Did Caesar not understand?

"But that is the end of the Republic," said Cicero, in gentle reproach, as though explaining the matter to an unreasonable child.

He could not have chosen a more unfortunate tone: this didactic, indulgent superiority was altogether too much for Caesar's overstrung nerves. The chair flew backwards.

"Republic! You dare to speak of the Republic, you, to whom it never meant anything but a means of gratifying your ambition, and furthering your dirty business affairs!"

"Caesar!" Cicero's features did their best to assume an expression of offended innocence, but the grimace was disregarded: the storm, once unleashed, continued to rage over his head.

"Republic! What is the Republic to you? A chance for factions to form a party; a pretext for little souls to sit in the seats of the mighty; the mortar that binds grains of sand until they attain the bigness of a rock; a medley of phrases, poses and perfidies, of lies that are too cowardly to confess themselves as such, of baseness that has not the energy to be consistent; and opportunity for mutual back-scratching; an alliance of mutual advantages; an association of hucksters, without a single noble or lofty idea, who inscribe 'equality' on their banner, knowing it to be a lie, because they are unwilling to see anyone rise above their own baseness! That is what the Republic is to you!"

The pale eyes were now dark and dilated; the tired voice rang through the room. Cicero felt himself in the presence of the victor of Pharsalus.

"I have made an end of *that* Republic; that is true. That Republic I have destroyed. For I truly desire what you professed to desire; I fill the word with meaning that on your lips was an empty sound: liberty! I have a mission, and I

intend to accomplish it: it is to save the people from you, to convince it of the emptiness of your words and deeds, to shatter the imprisoning walls which you have piled up in centuries of underground activity. I shall teach men to see; I shall plant will, resolution and a sense of responsibility in their souls. I shall give them the power to shape their lives themselves, the strength to contemn the idols with which you have checked their every free impulse, the courage to follow only the law that is in their hearts!

"You reproach me with being a tyrant, because you are choking with impotent fury to think that I have broken your own tyranny; you besmear all I say and do with your slaver of lies, because I have drawn the poison-fangs from your jaws; you glut your hatred of me until you are like to die of it—only because I have shown you that the one is stronger than the many—precisely because he is *one!*

"If at least you had the courage to rise against me! If you had the stiff neck of a Cato—Cato who killed himself when he got the worst of his encounter with me! But no; you oppose me politely, you obligingly resist me! You come to me with friendly proposals, with objections; you ask after my health before you come out with your 'ifs' and 'buts'—and are at heart thankful that there is someone to do the work for you, someone on whose actions and omissions you can exercise your sterile criticism, and who, despite your eternal babbling, sees to it that you can live in peace and quiet.

"Without me, where would be your Tusculum, where you have spent such peaceful weeks in this fine autumn weather? Where the villas, the strong-room, the ledgers of your allies? I stand with outspread arms to meet the storm, and receive its full fury, only that you, unscathed and undisturbed, may pursue your pettifogging affairs. When I am here no longer you will know what I was, and you will feel that you could tear me from my grave with bleeding fingers if only it would bring me back to life!

"Go, Cicero, go, 'father of the fatherland!' I am big enough to overlook the pettiness of you and your kind. But

remember one thing: if the worm in my path rises up against me, it may happen that my foot will crush it—simply because I do not notice it!"

Cicero did not know how he got out of the room. He came to himself only as the secretary was politely bowing him out of the palace. With an involuntary smile the young man watched the ex-Consul as he retreated, his affected dignity cracked like a bad varnish. Then once more the gong sounded from the work-room, and he hurried in, bearing the list of audiences before him like a banner, for it had grown during Cicero's visit.

In the eyes of the Dictator, as they fell once more on the list, there was still a flickering remnant of the fire that had lately blazed in them. Suddenly he broke into a ringing, delighted laugh:

"Caburus is here? Valerius Caburus? Bring him in!"

And breathing more quickly, he stood, waiting, till the curtain lifted.

A tall figure, doubly venerable, in spite of its slight stoop, in the white, purple-bordered toga; a brown, clear-cut face, in whose keen eyes was the light of a love that was almost worship. Caius Valerius Caburus, Senator by Caesar's grace, bowed low before the master of the world.

Caesar went up to him with outstretched hands:

"Caburus! My dear, dear old friend!"

"Imperator—" This was the official title which Caesar had retained even after relinquishing his military command.

"For you, Caesar!" interrupted his host, hastily. He pushed the visitor into a comfortable chair, drew his own nearer, and once more grasped the sunburned hand. "How glad I am to see you! Are all well at home? The mother, and Valeria, and Procillus?"

The torrent of words made short work of the fine set speech which the old man had prepared. He nodded, a little helplessly, and gave the desired information.

"All well, yes. I was to greet you heartily for all. Valeria

gave birth to her third son two months ago. He is called Caius—after you."

"After us!" amended Caesar, smiling. "We bear the same name." There was a momentary pause; and then he asked Caburus the very question with which he had received Cicero —but how warm and cordial it sounded now!

"And what brings you to me?"

This reminded the old man of the purpose of his visit. He sat up stiffly in his chair, and began:

"Noble and victorious—"

"And insuperable," Caesar interrupted, with a disparaging wave of the hand. "Yes, yes, I know. Don't make a speech, Caburus; that is what the Senate is for. To be brief and to the point: why are you here?"

"To thank you, Caesar."

"Thank me? For what? Well, well!"

"You have done more than you promised the League in the old days. We relied on you, and we have no cause to regret it. Not only does the whole of our country enjoy full civic rights; not only are we truly Romans now, possessing equal rights with other Romans. You have done even more for us: you have summoned our representatives to your council, and the purple border of my toga speaks for itself—"

Caesar laughed: the clear, delighted, youthful laugh which had survived all the vicissitudes of his career.

"We have travelled a long way together, have we not, since I first sought you out on my way back from Spain? No one would have thought then that we should ever meet as we meet today: I was a political beginner with a load of debt, and you a simple farmer; the Senate was all-powerful, and the State in the hands of a few rogues and fools—"

"But you knew then what you wanted," Caburus interposed. "And you have reached your goal! You have abolished the power of the Senate and the rule of the incapable; you have brought justice and order into the country, you have given us what we valued above all things, and what we had always been thirsting for: freedom!"

At the word "goal" Caesar had grown grave again. When his visitor had ceased he was silent awhile; then he repeated, reflectively:

" 'Freedom' . . ." He raised his head, and looked sharply at Caburus. "What do you call 'freedom'?"

"To do or leave undone as one wills," was the prompt reply.

Slowly and thoughtfully Caesar shook his head.

"To do or leave undone what one should," he said. He rose to his feet, and fell to pacing to and fro, with his hands clasped behind him.

"But now," he said, half under his breath, "a man left me to whom I said what you have just said to me now. For you were right on one point: I have destroyed the government of stupidity and intolerance, and have restored justice. If you call that freedom, then I have given the country freedom. But, Caburus, is that really freedom? Is the slave really free when you release him from his servility? Is it freedom simply to find that one's actions are no longer restricted by external limits?" He halted, and looked searchingly into the old man's eyes. "In every man's heart there is a law—sometimes plainly recognizable, sometimes deciphered with difficulty—which regulates his thoughts, his intentions, his deeds. Whatever you undertake, it tells you, with an accuracy far surpassing that of the finest jeweller's balance, whether you have done right or wrong. You are content with yourself only when you are in harmony with this law. Then the whole world may be against you, but you are stronger than the world; you are at peace and at one with yourself, because you know that you have done what you should, what you yourself permitted yourself to do.

"See, Caburus, that is what I call freedom: to recognize the law within one's own heart, and then, under all circumstances, to act as it prescribes, fearless and heedless of consequences. It is well for those who have achieved this true, this inner freedom! Death and all its terrors may threaten them, the earth itself may crumble beneath their feet, but they are

proof against all: for out of destruction and annihilation rises the idea which they have served, and the great example which they have given.

"And now tell me: have I given you this freedom? Can one ever give others this freedom? One has it or one has it not. At most, one can cherish the seed of it as a father cherishes his children. You, Caburus, have always had this freedom; many in your Transpadana had it. That was why I loved the county from the first moment, and why I gave it all I could give—gave it everything but this one thing.

"Go, Caburus, my friend—a strong, free husbandman! Show by your example how this freedom should be won! Lift your head high above those who love their yoke because it is golden, and kindle the sacred flame in hearts that are like your own, that it may burn as brightly in them as in your own! And know this: that even if my work had been done for you alone—I should be content with myself."

With a silent salute the old man left the room, feeling his way along the wall to the curtained doorway, for his eyes were blind with tears.

In the hall the secretary received him, and escorted him with affectionate respect to the outer gate. Then, as he once more heard the clear tone of the gong, he murmured a word of excuse and hurried back into the palace.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

With his hand in readiness to write on the tablets before him, which were now all but covered with hastily-scribbled notes, Antonius waited for the next words of the dictation. With feverish haste he had listened to the volcanic torrent of words, revising, abbreviating, forcing them into the compass of brief notes which at home would furnish the basis of the great and comprehensive plan. Figures, numbers of legions, place-names were jumbled up together; some of them were doubly or trebly underlined; the number XVII—the number of the legions to be held in readiness—the word 'Apollonia,' the mustering-place of this great army: Caesar was plan-

ning a fresh and gigantic campaign, and was now making the final preparations.

But the dictation was not continued. Antonius, whose eyes had been fixed on his tablets, looked up. A sudden wave of dread swept over him; never yet had he seen the physical decline in Caesar's features so plainly as now, in this cold, merciless half-light that fell into the room through the wide library window. The head, with its kingly brow, was drooping wearily on the breast; the lids were sunken over the half-extinguished eyes; on either side of the boldly-jutting nose two furrows were engraven, enclosing the chin, no longer rounded, and ending only at the edge of the jawbone. There were deep hollows on the temples and under the cheek-bones; and there was not a trace of color in the rigid features.

His sudden dread was replaced by a feeling of oppressive anxiety. The face that he now saw before him reminded him of the ancestral portraits, copied from death-masks, which stood in the halls of aristocratic houses. So lifeless was the beloved face that for a moment the thought occurred to him that the final event had already come to pass—that the unconquerable one had at last been overcome by a mightier conqueror.

Then Caesar raised his head; his eyes opened, and the dead features were once more inspired with life.

"That, I think, was all," he said, in a tired, melancholy voice. "It is now the end of February. Within three weeks you can complete the concentration of the troops. I propose to leave Rome at the end of March."

Antonius quickly made a note of the fact, and clapping the tablets together, was about to rise.

A sign from Caesar stopped him.

"Stay with me a little while," he said quietly. "I am so alone," he added almost inaudibly.

Antonius leaned back in his chair and waited in silence.

For a while Caesar did not speak. His restless fingers had picked up an ivory statuette from the table—a perfect little

figure from Asia Minor, which King Nicomedes had given him long ago—and were playing with it. Then, out of the silence and the deepening twilight, the weary voice spoke again:

"Why, do you suppose, am I undertaking this war against the Parthians?"

Antonius indifferently shrugged his young, athletic shoulders.

"I have not thought about it, Imperator," he cheerfully replied. "Perhaps to avenge Crassus?" he said at a guess.

A shake of the head.

"No? Then to improve the south-eastern frontiers?"

Again a shake of the head.

"Then I really do not know. . ."

"Because there is nothing further for me to do in Rome." The pale, shadowy figure had almost faded into the darkness.

"What?" Antonius could hardly trust his ears.

"Or rather, because I do not know how to do anything further in Rome. What is the end of all my efforts, my incessant labors; what is the end of all the thought and anxiety and adjustment and negotiation which has made me old and weary before my time? That no one thanks me for what I have done troubles me least of all; I have never counted on gratitude. But no one is any the better off for all my efforts —at all events, no one will admit that he is. Men would still be the same, even though I were to bring the Elysian fields to earth. They retain their old stupidity and pettiness, their eternal prosiness. Where is there a single man who has tried to uplift himself, who has taken the trouble to understand my intentions, who has even wished to understand me? Mark this, Antonius: you may give men what you will, you may open your veins and give them your heart's blood, but you cannot change them in the slightest degree.

"All may be new all round them, but they remain what they were of old. It is all in vain, all in vain!"

The weary voice was louder, yet something was broken in it. And now it sank again.

"And since I have recognized this I can no longer endure to remain in Rome. There is nothing left for me to do here. The only thing that I can still do is to expand the territory of the empire, to prepare a country for the coming generations, which perhaps—perhaps!—will understand something of what I have wished to do. War—in that, I feel, there is still a possibility of really accomplishing something. There at least I can see myself going forward, step by step; I can touch the stones of the cities that I have conquered; I can grasp the sods of the soil that I have won for Roman colonists. I have set the rock of Gaul before the gate of the Germanic invasion; I have built the wall of Spain, Africa, Egypt, and the outer wall of Illyria, Greece and Asia Minor. There is still a gap in the structure; I am now about to wall it up, so strongly that no one shall ever climb into the closed ring.

"That, Marcus, is my reason for undertaking this campaign: it is to prove to myself that I am still good for something; it will be the last thing of importance in my life. It will be a long campaign, and it may well be that I shall not live to see the end of it.—No, do not speak. I know that my life is nearing its end. But I shall be permitted to complete my work, at least outwardly, and so to die as I have always wished; while still working, while still active; and knowing that I am not yet quite on the shelf, that I am not quite worn out."

The twilight had deepened, and the figure in the white toga was now only a lighter patch on the darkness that seemed to be absorbing it.

After a long pause Antonius broke the oppressive silence.

"You are refusing to see yourself as you are. The royal crown—"

An impatient movement interrupted him.

"The royal crown is a mere externality—like all that I am offered or refused in Rome. I am king without the crown. As a matter of fact, I cannot endure that these people should imagine that they can still in any way affect my decisions.

The comedy at the feast of the Lupercalia, when you three times offered me the diadem, and I three times refused it, while the rabble howled with delight, is a thing of which I shall always be bitterly ashamed. Who am I that I should find it necessary to flatter these vermin?"

His fingers closed on the statuette. There was suddenly a slight crack; an arm had broken off the figure. Mechanically and abstractedly Caesar fitted the broken parts together; then he set the mutilated masterpiece carefully back on the table, and laid the broken arm beside it.

"Now even that has broken in my hand," he said slowly. "Like Roman freedom," he added, with a disdainful laugh. Republican pride, I suppose? And all the time he is secretly quaking with fear, for at heart he is hardly less of a coward than the rest, who, if they want to steal the wreaths that unknown friends have placed on my Hermes, do so secretly "Freedom! Do they know what use to make of it? The result is merely that they are insolent! The lordly people's tribune, Pontius Aquila, remains seated when I pass him! by night. Before my face they smirk submissively, duck their heads and bend their backs; behind my back they clench their fists and curse me. Or do you suppose that I do not know what ill feeling there was because I gave my son and Cleopatra's the name of Caesarian? How they murmured when I placed Cleopatra's statue beside the statue of the goddess in my new temple of Venus? I ought not to have made any compromise; I ought to have followed the impulse of my heart; if I had done so one image alone would have stood in that temple: that of my queen!"

Wrathfully he rose to his feet, and went to the window, his hands clasped behind his back. Without turning round, he continued:

"The stupidest calumnies are not bad enough for them. I pardon Marcellus; some criminal or other kills him on the way back to Rome; of course it was I who caused him to be killed—as though I had any reason to make away with the dull, harmless fellow!—I exchange a few friendly letters with

the Egyptian court; and at once people say that I am going to remove my place of residence to Alexandria, in order to be crowned as an Oriental despot! And then people wonder at my outbreaks of anger—find me incalculable and capricious! I control myself as well as I can; if I did not I would order my soldiers to make an end of this whole rotting nest of scoundrels, fools and blockheads, and give the city to the flames, in order to rid the earth for good and all of this pestilential sore!"

He spoke in a stifled, guttural tone, and there was something in his voice that sent a cold shudder down Antonius' spine. Then he went back to his chair, and when he next spoke his voice was weary as before, and he himself was a phantom barely perceptible in the darkness.

"There are no exceptions. Brutus, whom I received with kindness after Pharsalus, and on whom I lavished an undeserved friendship, felt that he owed it to his heroic republican pose to marry Cato's daughter Porcia, the widow of my old enemy Bibulus. And the whole Senate swoons with admiration of such old-fashioned republican virtue—where I see only falsity, craft, and treachery. It makes me sick!"

He was silent, and laid his hand over his smarting eyes. Again the oppressive silence fell in the all but perfectly dark room.

Then Antonius began to speak, cautiously feeling his way, like one who is treading on ice.

"Brutus—yet you always thought highly of him. . ."

For a long while no answer came out of the darkness; then, very quietly, Caesar said:

"I had my reasons for valuing him. . ."

Under other circumstances these words would have silenced Antonius. Today, however, he persisted; he must relieve his mind of what he suspected. . . of what he knew. . .

"Are you—are you sure of him?"

"What do you mean?" There was a note of attention in the voice.

"I mean—are you sure that you can rely on him?"

"Rely . . . I have never entrusted him with anything."

Antonius reflected; then he continued, even more cautiously:

"Do you feel that you can rely on his character?"

The tired, broken voice was suddenly steady and resolute —a voice accustomed to command:

"You know something. Say it!"

Antonius hesitated, then said impulsively:

"Yes, Imperator, I know something. I know much. I know that Brutus has conspired against you with Cassius, Trebonius, Metullus Cimber, Casca, and many others."

"Against me? Why?" The voice that asked the question was calm and dispassionate.

"Why? Because you have crushed them! Because they cannot endure your greatness! Because they cannot endure the thought that they are not the rulers of Rome, but that you and you alone are its master!"

Silence. Then again the voice spoke from the darkness.

"I cannot believe it."

Antonius smote his hands together, groaned, and threw himself passionately forwards.

"Believe it, Caesar, I beseech you, believe it! My information is from the most reliable source! Every night they meet in Cassius' house; they hold secret conferences, and lay their plans—"

"What sort of plans?"

The word at first refused to pass Antonius' lips. Then he said, in a lifeless voice, as though he himself were afraid of the truth:

"To murder you!"

Silence . . . Silence . . . then, suddenly, out of the darkness, a shrill burst of laughter, that echoed horribly in the spacious room.

"I wanted only that! That is the crowning touch! Now I know that all was indeed in vain! In vain all my efforts, in vain all my labor, in vain my whole life, whose sole aim was to save the welfare of humanity! So it is for this, the

fifty-six years of nerve-destroying effort, the privations and dangers, the wounds and sickness, the sorrow and suffering! If one ever could succeed in accomplishing anything in this grotesque world, stupidity would come and destroy it all at a blow! . . . It is only fitting . . ."

Antonius heard the quick, excited breathing, and then again the voice, now cold and scathing:

"And Brutus even is among them, you say? *My son Brutus?* Who never heard an angry word from me, who, all his life, has had nothing but kindness from me? Brutus rises against me, places himself at the head of the conspiracy against me, lifts the sword against my breast? I cannot conceive it, and yet I know that it is true: It is too perfect an example of the senselessness of all that happens! This world is past all helping: one may subdue it, one may enslave it, but woe to the man who slackens the tightly-drawn rein for a single moment; woe to the man who believes humanity capable of any better or nobler impulse!"

The voice was silent. In vain Antonius tried to decipher Caesar's expression. Hesitatingly he asked:

"Shall I take precautions? Shall I have Brutus and the others arrested?"

"No." Now the voice was once more perfectly composed and dispassionate. "No precautions. No arrests. What must happen will happen. And above all, no anxiety. I have lived long enough; they will kill only a dead man. Go, Marcus."

"But—"

"Go."

Without another word, Antonius rose to his feet and crept through the darkness to the door. It was night. . .

THE LAST NIGHT

"Has the Imperator any further commands!"

"Nothing more." A hand was wearily lifted in a gesture of dismissal. The slave extinguished the lamp and, walking backwards, left the bedroom.

Caesar stretched himself to his full length, and emptied

his lungs with a sudden sigh. His burning eyes stared into the purple darkness. With a slight shudder he drew the blankets over his breast.

Once more a night lay before him which resembled all the other nights of the last few years; first a long, tormented waiting for sleep that would not come, then a mindless, reeling sinking into depths that closed on him as a dungeon without light or air closes on a condemned prisoner; a darkness full of phantoms and frightful visions, the horror of which was dulled by long familiarity . . . and at last, the awakening, with a head heavy as lead, a stale, nauseous taste on his tongue, and in his heart a profound disgust at the thought of the coming day.

How long would this continue? What would be the last link of the chain to whose length every morning added an infinitesimal fraction? When would he come to the end? What would be the manner of this end? A physical breakdown, a collapse of the too long overstrained nerves? Or was Antonius right? Were the daggers which were seeking his blood already whetted?

He groped for the little table that stood beside his couch until his fingers closed round the beaker of honey-sweetened water. He took a deep draught, and carefully replaced the beaker on the table.

To wait. Still to wait. As he had waited all his life. First it was success—power—for which he waited. And then for the miracle. And now he waited for the last thing of all: a little rest, as much as is vouchsafed even to the poorest of men.

Quite still, quite motionless he lay, striving to let the endless, rushing thoughts stream past him, striving to escape from the terrible oppression that lay heavy upon him, wrapping him as in a stony shroud. There was no despair in his heart; no thrill of burning agony, no lapsing into pain and torment; only a profound and utter weariness, only an infinite disgust at the idea of continuing to vegetate, only the passionate longing for nothingness: he had balanced the ac-

count of his life, and the sum was zero. . . How long had he been lying thus? In such nights as these minutes became decades, and the nameless oppression of an hour an eternity. Such a night sucked the marrow out of one's bones, the blood out of one's veins, and all thought and feeling and will from heart and brain.

And then, suddenly, a convulsive shudder ran through his body. He listened inwardly, with straining senses, fully awake, completely master of himself, tense and alert as all the great hours of his life had found him.

No: he was not mistaken: he felt now as he had felt long ago in the house of Lucceius.

He could have found no words to describe what rose before him. To his first vague perception it seemed like a gigantic head. But now that it had gained in distinctness he felt that human speech had no word, no conception which would define it. It gazed upon him—and yet it had no eyes; rather it was itself all eye; it spoke to him—and yet it had no mouth; rather it was itself a mouth. In this unearthly apparition all sensual functions seemed to revert to their fundamental essence; they needed no mediate organs; they were active of their own virtue. And it was not as though this were outside him; somehow—he himself could not explain how—he was one with this unnameable thing; he was a part of it, and yet the whole; at once object and subject. Once more the great Bridge-builder was there.

Now he was perfectly composed. A profound, narcotic stillness invaded him, quieting the hammering heart, cooling the burning temples.

"Hast thou come again?" he asked, almost eagerly, almost with a smile.

"Yes," came the answer.

"I have looked for thee often."

"I was always within thee."

"Why didst thou never speak to me?"

"Because thou hadst to find the way thyself."

"And why dost thou speak now?"

"Because the time has come."

Caesar drew a deep breath. He clasped his hands behind his neck, and closed his eyes.

"What hast thou to say to me?"

"That thou hast come to the end."

"To the end?"

"Yes."

"Quite to the end?"

"Quite to the end."

A brief moment of hesitation: so much time as was needed fully to grasp the fact. Then:

"Tonight?"

"No."

"When?"

"Thou callest it tomorrow."

Once more a moment of hesitation, of reflection. Then, quite composedly, quite nonchalantly:

"Is it—violence?"

"Yes."

Caesar sought within himself for a trace of fear, of shuddering reluctance, but he found no such thing. It all seemed as matter-of-fact as the simplest every-day occurrence. He was still conscious of an eagerness which he himself found inexplicable.

"And that is why thou hast come?"

"Yes."

"To judge me?"

"Judge thee? No."

"What then?"

"To weigh thee."

Again that curious alertness, that tension of every nerve and muscle. "Thou wilt not find me light," he said quietly. "My life was all a wandering on false paths. I strove toward goals which I perceived to be false when I had reached them; I did things whose uselessness I realized when they were done. If I look back over my life, it is all one monstrous misunderstanding: I wanted to give order to the world—and

bore chaos in my own breast; I wanted to uplift mankind—and forgot that I must first uplift myself; my work was as the playing of children who build a house of sand; the next gust of wind suffices to scatter it and leave nothing remaining."

A deep, solemn silence. Then:

"Thou art wrong; as thou sayest thou wast wrong all thy life long."

"I am wrong? Has anything of all that I created the power to endure?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Thyself."

"I?" Incomprehension and amazement. "But thou hast said that my end has come, that even tomorrow—"

"The end of the mortal in thee. Thine achievement is immortal."

"Of what achievement dost thou speak?"

"That which thou hast achieved upon thyself, within thyself. The temple which thou hast built in thy heart. The true world which thou hast created in thy soul, and which will outlast this mundane world."

Once more, a profound silence. Then said Caesar, with a shudder of awe:

"I knew it."

"Knew? No. Felt—suspected—experienced in hours when the cry of life was less loud within thee. Yes: thou hast strayed on many mistaken paths, thou hast done many ill deeds; needlessly and uselessly thou hast shed much blood. Even this night thou wilt suffer such torment for these things as few men have ever yet suffered: for thou hast sinned against the highest, thou hast infringed the greatest law that has been vouchsafed to this world; but thou hast in the end understood this, and this understanding brings thee salvation. There is only one thing that *is*:"

"Love," said Caesar, quietly, in completion.

"Thou sayest it . . ." breathed the Unnameable. "And be-

cause thou hast understood this, thou hast been to me a good instrument, that has done its work even as I conceived it; and because thou hast understood this, the best of thee will not perish, but will live on when of all the vast fabric of the Roman empire not a stone is left upon another."

Silence and stillness. Caesar, shaken to the depths of his being, had recognized in the words of the apparition words which he himself had spoken in this or that conjuncture; realized that it was the divine in him that had given him these words, and without his knowledge had used him to serve mysterious aims whose greatness was beyond his comprehension. And this realization filled him with such an infinite sense of happiness that all that was earthly and human within him was dissolved in it.

After long silence he asked:

"Hast thou more to say to me?"

"No more than this: it was energy that drove thee onward all thy life. Thou hast used it, all but a little remnant. Use this remnant to endure the terrors that await thee this very night with unshaken courage, and tomorrow, by the statue of Pompeius, thou shalt fall under the daggers of thy murderers as greatly as thou hast lived . . ."

* * * * *

Caesar breathed deeply. Still, still was the night; the apparition had vanished.

His bewildered eyes looked about him as though they could pierce the absolute darkness. Vague flecks of color appeared, combining to form circles and spirals and curves of fantastic intricacy, only to disappear . . . Silence: a dead, leaden stillness, as before a hurricane . . .

How had the Gallic city suddenly come here? In their broad, defiant massiveness the checkered walls, rooted in the rich, brown soil, rose against the paling sky of evening. Their battlements were unmanned, and the gate yawned like the wound of a bloodless body. He passed through the gate, and through the narrow, winding streets. The low houses stood

in silent ruin, their gables bowed to one another, and from these houses an infinite sadness seemed to emanate. Not a man, not a living creature was to be seen. Over all was a dull silence, unbroken by the faintest sound, however the wanderer might strain his ears. Even his steps were inaudible: as though he were walking not on hard-trodden earth but over swampy ground. The sense of solitude about him was so infinite that he was like to perish of longing for something living; a bird, the tiniest beast. But there was nothing—nothing; he was alone as never before in his life.

He longed to escape, to retrace the way by which he had come, to leave the accursed city, which, he knew, though he could not explain the reason, was a place of utter horror—and he could not escape. Something was driving him forward, moving his feet against his will, so that they were forced to go forward, step by step, on and on.

He was approaching a street corner. Every moment the terror within him was increasing, as though he knew that round this corner something fearful was lying in wait for him, something that would seize him as soon as he left the shelter of the house-walls. In vain he sought to delay his steps; he was forced to go forward, ever forward, although he could have shrieked with terror.

Now he had come to the corner. A step further, and he had turned it. In desperate resolve, with a last remnant of pride and energy he swung his head round; the horror should not take him unprepared; he would *look* at it, would gaze into its Medusa face . . .

Nothing . . .

And yet: the strangeness, the impossibility of what he saw was worse than the worst: for here was the broad Via Triumphalis, leading to the Capitol; gleaming in the sun, in all the splendor of the stately buildings that hemmed it in. White and gold above all the Temple of Jupiter gleamed on the crest of the hill, the temple to which the Triumphator was wont to bring his thank-offering to the gods. When he had last come this way it had been full of rejoicing men and

women, shouting as though frantic with joy. Now it was empty—empty—and the gold and marble sparkled at him as in ghastly mockery.

But this way he was forced to tread. Step by step he went forward, robbed of his will, the prey of something that held him wholly under its spell, something that had erased his very individuality, as the butt of the stylus erases the characters on a wax tablet. On and on he was forced to go, further and further up the hill, without the power to turn, without the power to stop.

Now he had reached the top of the hill; he was standing on the wide platform, before the altar whose fire he had so often kindled. The strange power that had driven him onward had left him now that he had reached the summit. He was once more alone—absolutely alone.

Breathing deeply, with a faint sense of amazement, he looked about him. His gaze swept over the huddle of houses at his feet, across the plains which lay outstretched beyond them—to the sea.

For suddenly the sea was there. Its infinite expanse lay before the walls of the city, and its waves washed a breakwater that seemed to him curiously familiar, a long, very long harbor pier, at the end of which an island rose with its lighthouse. His eyes hastily swept the shore, till they found a snow-white palace, from one of whose windows a long, white veil was waving, tossing wildly in a wind whose swishing did not reach his ears.

As though seeking aid, his glance wandered back to the altar before which he stood. He started violently, and looked again: the marble which had but now been white was crimson.

His breast, constricted with dread, sought to relieve itself by a long, long breath, but in vain: the horror remained, the strangling torment so terrible that he could not even cry aloud. Slowly, with unspeakable effort, he turned his head.

The temple, the platform, all had disappeared. He was

standing on a mountain peak, and a dense, deep red mist floated and whirled about him.

Something in the eddying mass began to assume a shape, and the shape gained in distinctness, and freed itself from the surrounding chaos. Immobile, yet it glided forward, like a statue moved by unseen hands. Now it stood before him: a Gaul. Caesar gazed earnestly at the deathly features, but with no recognition; this was but one of the many on whom his eyes had fallen during the eight long years of the Gallic campaigns, one of the many whose heart had been pierced by a Roman spear or a Roman sword: for on his breast he bore a red wound, from which a thin, red thread of blood was trickling incessantly to the ground.

And now there were more: one like another, all rigid and lifeless, staring with dead eyes at the solitary man, and each bore a wound on breast or body or forehead. And ever more and more of them came, escaping from the red mist, that seemed never weary of bringing forth these innumerable phantoms. Some Caesar seemed to recognize: Dumnorix, who was slain before the invasion of Britain, Akko, whom he had executed at the time of the assembly of Samarobriva.

And others too came: Germans. Taller than the Gauls, with savage features, their ruddy locks matted with blood, stiff and dead like all the rest. Even women were among them—and children. Why did the German wild-cats defend themselves so furiously?

Still more, and even more . . . The eye could no longer recognize them as individuals; it saw them only in masses; Britons, Spaniards, Egyptians, men of Asia Minor, Numidians; an innumerable host, that hemmed him in like an unscaleable wall.

Suddenly there was a dull and curiously uniform glitter in the midst of the grey host: the weapons and harness of the fallen legionaries. Just as they were in life, so they were assembled in their centuries, maniples, cohorts, legions! The eagle of the Fifteenth, which had remained, to the last man, on the field of Aduatuca, gleamed through the tide of blood

for a moment, and disappeared. So incalculably great was the number of the motionless figures that it seemed as though all the dead of the world had assembled to demand an accounting of him, a single man.

Desperately he looked about him. Hemmed in by the dread wall, he stood alone, at his feet a little patch of ground that shrank with the coming of each new figure. From thousands and thousands of wounds the blood trickled to the earth, till the earth itself was red.

Now individual figures emerged from the host, pushing forward until they were close before him. Sabinius and Cotta stared at him from extinguished eyes; Curio, Clodius, Cato, Pothinus, Labienus—Pompeius, Vercingetorix! Their heads nodded on their limp necks; their hands, hanging lifeless, had crooked their fingers, as though they were the hands of fettered men who sought in vain to reach the throat of the executioner.

Caesar tried to stretch out his arms, to thrust the apparitions away from him—but he could not. As though paralyzed, he must perforce submit to all, must answer the gaze of the dead eyes, that rested upon him like a burden of unnameable horror.

And suddenly one was quite, quite close before him, and though he was like to swoon with dread, he recognized the man: it was the legionary Glabrio, whom his men had picked up during the campaign against the Eburones. He had no eyes, for they had been torn out, and from the empty orbits matter and blood were trickling; he had no hands, for they had been hacked off, and the stumps were swathed in bloody rags. But he turned his ravaged face to Caesar, and lifted his mutilated arms toward him, and it seemed as though he wished to seize him, and to drag him into the horrors to which he himself had fallen a victim.

And now the stream of blood began to rise like a tide. First it washed about Caesar's feet, and soon about his ankles, and it was cold with an icy coldness that was like no earthly cold. Higher it rose and higher, more rapidly every moment,

lapping his thighs, his loins, closing about his body, his chest, his throat—

And then all the myriads of the dead flung up their arms and opened their dead lips, and all together they uttered a cry so terrible that Caesar, beside himself with anguish and terror, lost consciousness.

And as he sank into oblivion he felt the icy stream of blood rush into his mouth.

THE IDES OF MARCH.

CAESAR started up on his elbows, and looked about him with bewildered eyes.

It was broad daylight. Slaves stood about his bed, gazing at him anxiously.

Slowly he came to himself. He drew a few long breaths, controlled the trembling of his limbs, and passed his hand over his forehead; it was damp with cold, sticky sweat.

Once more he looked about him, and his gaze was like that of a man coming out of a dungeon. Gradually he was realizing that all had been a dream, that all the terrors of the night had been within him, had emerged from his own self.

Something more too he realized; that in this long night he had lived his life over again, from the years of his childhood, through all its battles and victories, through all its unspeakable happiness and grief, through all, until yesterday.

And he knew, lastly, that in all that delirium one thing had been actual: the words of the apparition. He knew that he had indeed come to the end; that he would not see the evening of this day.

At last he spoke, and in his voice, composed though it was, there still vibrated something of the horror that he had felt in the night:

"What do you want?"

The slaves hesitated; then his body-servant said, softly:

"You were crying out in your sleep, lord. We thought you were calling us."

He did not answer, save by a slight shake of the head. Then he asked—and now the last trace of horror had left his voice:

"What day is this?"

"The ides of March."

He nodded. Was there not a prophecy which had warned him against the ides of March? How it all fitted together! The ring was closing . . . He sat up.

"The bath is ready?"

"Yes, lord; but—"

"Well?"

"The mistress begs the Imperator urgently that she may speak to him."

"To me?" He considered, stood up, and threw a cloak about his shoulders. "Let someone tell her that I am coming."

It was not far to Calpurnia's apartments, and his wife made it shorter by meeting him halfway, discomposed and trembling.

"Caius," she cried, "you intend to go out today?"

He nodded quietly.

"Yes: the Senate sits today:

"Don't go! I beseech you, don't go!" she cried, almost beside herself with despair. And since he looked at her in amazement, she continued, even more desperately: "I have had frightful dreams—you were standing in the market-place, and you were wounded in many places, and the blood was gushing from your wounds as though from a spring. And all the people came, and dipped their hands in it, and washed themselves in it." She looked at him with a wild, unsteady gaze, waiting for his answer.

But instead of the answer he spoke only one word:

"Well?"

She threw up her hands.

"Well? Well? Something terrible is threatening you, a dreadful catastrophe, if you leave the house! Stay at home, I beseech you, stay at home today!"

His face was quite calm, superhumanly calm. A majesty lay upon it, a greatness before which she involuntarily fell back in silence. Then he spoke, and in his voice was the same greatness, the same majesty:

"Whatever may befall has been appointed from the beginning. Only madmen seek to take arms against an insuperable

destiny. I know that I am at one with it: I know that nothing further can befall me. I am going, Calpurnia."

He turned away, and it was only this movement that gave her courage to make a last attempt to detain him. But even as he moved away he turned back to look at her, lifting his hand in a gesture of refusal, and she stood as though paralyzed. With drooping head and arms she listened, helplessly, in silence, to the echoing footsteps.

Never yet had the bath so gratefully closed about his body. The tepid water lapped itself about his limbs, and drew from them the last remnant of their lethargy. Cheerfully, still wrapped in superhuman calm, he washed himself limb by limb, seeming and feeling as though he were fulfilling a sacred rite.

For a moment the thought occurred to him that even the beasts for sacrifice are washed before they are led to the altar. But the thought did not distress him: for he was indeed to be a sacrifice; but he was also the priest who accomplishes the sacrifice—and the divinity to whom the reek of the hot blood ascends.

At length he left the bath. He let the slaves swathe him in soft woollen wraps, and surrendered himself to the skilful fingers of the barber. All was tranquil, without and within him . . .

A slave approached, and waited while two others replaced the light sandals by the crimson boots with their half-moon decorations, and brought out the tunica. Then, submissively, he asked what garments the Imperator wished to wear.

Caesar's glance travelled along the open chests in which his garments lay side by side. He was on the point of choosing this or that, but each time he hesitated to make his choice. Finally he rose to his feet, went up to a closed cupboard, which contained his old field uniforms and pointed to it. The door opened; cuirasses, helmets and mantles met his eyes.

He selected one of the mantles: it was of thick, strong cloth. He had worn it only once: on the day when he had overcome the Nervii. How long ago that was! With his own

hands he lifted the mantle out. That would be worthiest of the day.

"This!" he said, laconically.

Accustomed to blind obedience, the servant folded the mantle, hung it like a toga about his lord's left shoulder, bringing it round under the right arm, and again over the left shoulder. This done, he stepped back with a deep reverence.

Caesar stood alone in the middle of the room. Silently he looked about him, and it was as though his gaze penetrated the walls of the house, reviewing all that his eyes had ever seen. Once more he saw the checkered walls of the Gallic city, as plainly as though they were actually standing before him; once more he saw the forests of Germania, the chalk cliffs of Britannia, the mountains of Spain, the fruitful plain of Transpadana, the smiling meadows of Hellas, the wildernesses of Asia Minor, the desert sands of Numidia. Once more the lights of the royal palace of Alexandria shone before him. His heart swelled; he had been long astray, but after all he was reaching the goal. The appartion of the night had spoken the truth: his earthly self might be annihilated, but that which he had accomplished, the world which he had created in his soul, could never, never perish.

A beloved name rose to his lips: the last of all names to have value and meaning for him. He uttered it, so softly that he himself could not hear it. And then again he stood in silence, motionless, and set free from all that bound him to his earthly life.

The curtain lifted; his body-servant entered, bowed, and announced:

"The deputation from the Senate is here to escort the Imperator to the sessions."

Slowly, with awe-inspiring majesty, Caesar turned his head.

"Let them enter!"

They came, one by one: Marcus Brutus first of all. The noble, slightly effeminate young head was very erect, and his

eyes were the eyes of a fanatic; behind him was Cassius, thin, sunburned, with the silent tread of a beast of prey; then came Trebonius, with his immobile, wooden face; then Decimus Brutus, who could hardly conceal the trembling of his hands; then Casca; then Metellus Cimber; then Cinna—and many more, whose names he scarcely knew.

His gaze rested quietly on each in turn. The faces of one and all were pale and bloodless, and none of them seemed able to meet his eyes.

There was a profound silence. Then Caesar asked, and his voice was like the clang of a sword against a shield of bronze:

"Are you all here?"

There was a moment's hesitation. They exchanged glances. Then Brutus, with constricted throat, answered, in a stifled tone:

"All."

Once more Caesar looked at each in turn. And his gaze was so remote from them, so lofty, so indescribably noble and majestic, that each man shuddered in the depths of his soul.

Once more the voice sounded, close to their ears, and yet so remote that it might have spoken from another world:

"Let us go!"

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